Commentary

Volume Sixty-two, Number Two, August 1976

"EUROCOMMUNISM" & ITS FRIENDS

Walter Laqueur

CARTER AND THE JEWS

Milton Himmelfarb

THE POVERTY OF SOCIALIST THOUGHT
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AN EXCHANGE OF POPULATIONS
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BOOKS IN REVIEW
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Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.
Joseph Shattan
Jane Larkin Crain
Jeane Kirkpatrick

THE NEW ISOLATIONISM: Norman Podhoretz and Critics

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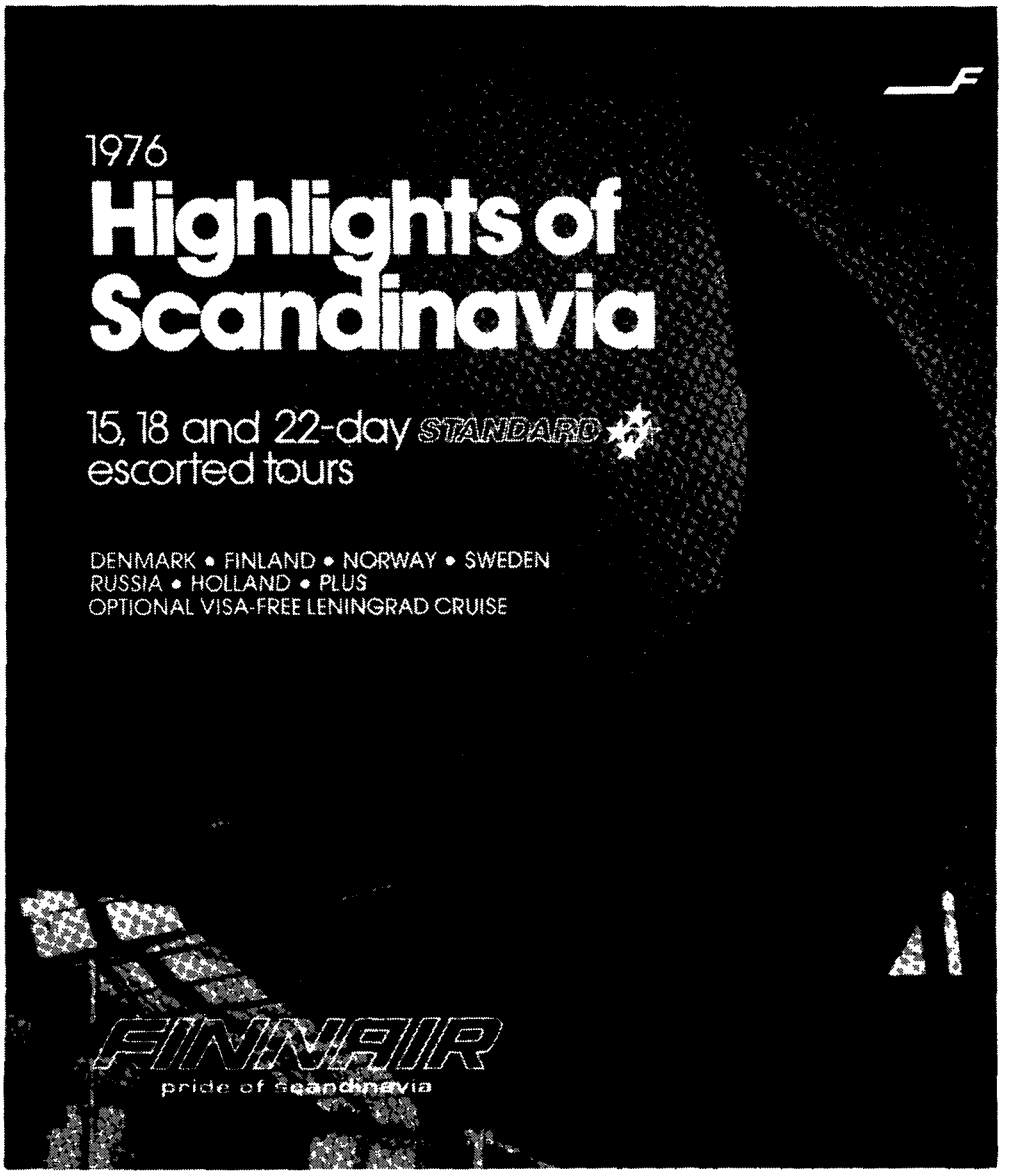

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Commentary

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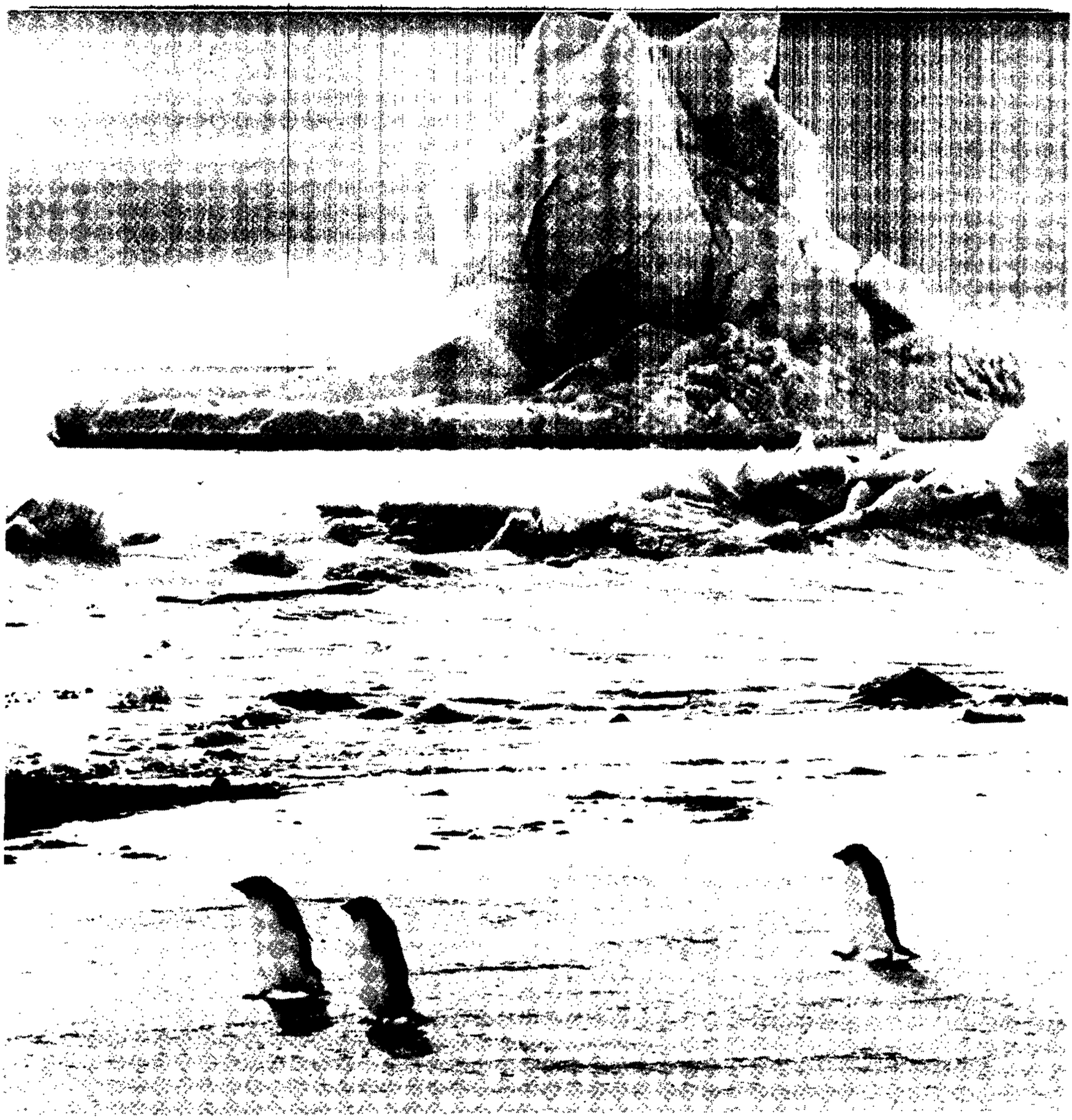

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Letters from Readers

The New Isolationism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's article, "Making the World Safe for Communism" [April], is as important as Andersen's "The Emperor's New Clothes." Its message—to use a term which is becoming obsolete—is intensely patriotic, and the patriotism is that of a citizen of the world. . . . His apocalyptic article is all the more impressive, in that the author at no point loses his cool. Yet Mr. Podhoretz's diagnosis should send shivers down the spine of every perceptive reader, for his article is not a fantasy about the future like *1984*. The dateline is now, and even now may be too late. Yet better the awareness of a cataclysm in progress than a fool's paradise. . . .

Many a skeptic considers the quarter of a century of American preponderance an adolescent aberration. "The American Empire lasted twenty-five years," said Gore Vidal a year ago at the Ford Hall Forum in Boston, visibly relieved by the fact that it was over. He suggested the dismantling of the American military establishment, with the exception of some 300,000 technicians to man the country's ballistic-missile installations. Since this would have slashed some 80 per cent of the defense budget, a large part of the audience applauded wildly. It did not occur to anybody to ask what this green light for Soviet expansion would mean for what remains of the free world. . . .

There exists a frightening nationwide trend of self-deception. Wishful thinking and sour grapes made Congress "save Angola from a drawn-out civil war." How do the slogans and arguments which accompanied Congress's denial of funds for Angola stand up in the light of the present?

Half a year later, there is not the slightest hint that Angola may become a Soviet counterpart to America's Vietnam, as was said at the time. The Soviets have not "fallen on their face in Angola" as was widely predicted, nor did they in strategic Somalia where they are firmly entrenched. American support for the pro-Western factions may indeed have coincided with South African interests, but it also coincided with the interests of Angola's neighbors, Zambia and Zaire, . . . and with three-quarters of black (as opposed to Arab) Africa which until the collapse of the pro-Western factions refused to recognize the MPLA. As for the national interests of the U.S., a world power is not a presidential candidate who can sit out a primary. Soviet help came first, but the problem in Angola was—and is—the Cubans. Their emergence as the Caribbean pawns of a Eurasian empire enabled the USSR to fight the Angolan war by proxy and introduced a completely new dimension into the Soviet-American competition, the importance of which was totally ignored by the lawmakers.

Mr. Podhoretz is brilliant, merciless, and realistic in his analysis, which makes the hopeful note on which he ends all the more abrupt and surprising. The concluding two pages seem to belie the tight logic of the first nine. . . . I believe like him that it is less a question of power than of will. But is the U.S. "in brute terms of military capacity . . . still the most powerful country of the world"? For quite some time America's statesmen have stopped making this claim, the President used it lately once, and only under duress, in reply to Ronald Reagan. . . . There are, of course, various ways to define military power. Since there exists a nuclear stalemate, "military capacity" should be measured in the potential for conventional warfare. Two years ago, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt warned that the Soviet navy had outdistanced its American counterpart, and it is well known that during the Yom Kippur War the U.S. airlift almost depleted the American arsenals in certain weapons. At the time it was also asserted that the USSR produced as many tanks in one month as the U.S. in a year. . . . Since the Soviet army pays its draftees only a fraction of what the U.S. pays its expensive mercenaries, the USSR is able to spend tens of billions of dollars more yearly than the U.S. for weapons, widening the gap from year to year.

Mr. Podhoretz sees grounds for hope in the fact that Henry Kissinger has lately switched in certain issues from his "Chamberlain" posture to a "Churchillian" stance. The President, too, has switched from détente to "peace through

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One of a series of reports on the first hundred years of the telephone.

Why the cost of telephone service has gone up less than the cost of almost anything else.

In the late 1920's, in a Chicago factory, the history of industrial relations reached a turning point. The plant, the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company, made telephones and telephone equipment for the Bell System. And in 1927 its managers had a puzzle.

The Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company, scene of what one economist called "the most exciting and important study of factory workers ever made."

For more than two years the company had been studying plant lighting and its relation to efficiency. (It was the era of the "efficiency expert" and "scientific management.") Increases in illumination were followed by increases in production, as expected. But decreases in light levels were also followed by increases in production. Two young women even maintained good production under light no brighter than moonlight.

It became clear that light had only a minor effect, and that there were many other variables to be identified. To solve the puzzle, the company undertook a further study, carried on jointly with the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. The researchers selected a group of six competent, experienced women, explained what they were trying to do, and requested their cooperation. Over a period of twenty-six months, the researchers added rest periods and snacks to the group's work schedule, shortened the work day, and then returned to the original schedule. The group showed an almost unbroken rise in average hourly production and also in total weekly production, even when the week was five hours shorter than at the start. At the end, their production was 30 percent above the beginning level.

The Hawthorne Experiments made it clear that the "scientific management" theory of the day relied too heavily on methods borrowed from the physical sciences. Two major conclusions are widely accepted now, but then their application to factory work was new:

People work better when they feel they are part of a team.

People work better when they feel what they are doing is important.

Today most businesses are aware of "group dynamics" and "job enrichment." But the lessons of Hawthorne have shaped

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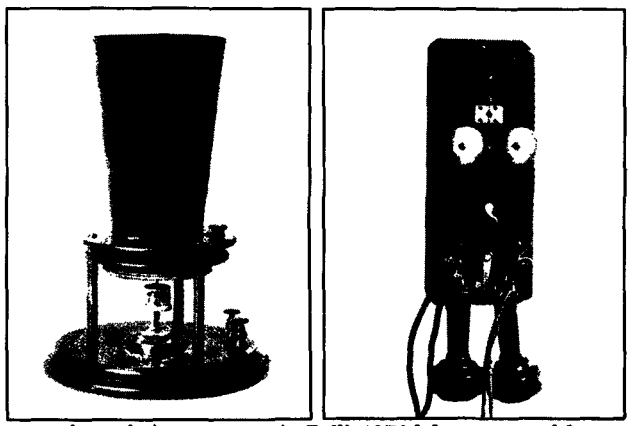
policy for many years, not just in Western Electric factories but in all parts of the Bell System. And the Bell System is still a leader in the exploration of factors affecting industrial productivity.

The prices of most telephone equipment made by Western Electric currently average 20 percent below the prices of other suppliers. Why?

New products for the Bell System are usually designed at Bell Laboratories, the research and development arm of the System. Bell Labs also sets quality standards. But at an early stage manufacturing engineers from Western Electric sit down with the designers and look for ways to save. All companies know that's the best time to cut costs; in the Bell System, that knowledge guides practice. The search for reduced costs continues after production begins. Every aspect of manufacturing is under constant reexamination. Western Electric's engineering cost reductions alone totaled $198 million in first-year savings in 1975.



An early improvement in Bell's 1876 laboratory model phone was the addition of a bell.

Yet none of these achievements would take place unless the people involved were convinced that it is important to produce good telephones at low cost. Phillip S. Babb of McKinsey and Co., management consultants, made this analysis in an interview published in the journal *International Management:*

> Western Electric has succeeded in making cost-cutting a central part of the ethos, the value system, by which their people live. Driving costs down—with retained high quality—is what they spend their working lives at. It is what they take their pride in. It is their way to the corporate top.

To put it another way, the business of the Bell System is providing good telephone service at reasonable cost; Western Electric's activities are directed toward that service goal, rather than toward simply making products.

That service goal characterizes all parts of the Bell System, including the twenty-three regional operating companies and the Long Lines Department. All the parts work closely together to achieve that goal, and all benefit as a result. The operating companies provide telephone service and report, through AT&T, to Bell Labs and Western Electric their needs and the needs of telephone users. Bell Labs and Western Electric design and manufacture equipment to meet known needs as well as the best estimates of expected needs. And the local companies are assured of having the products customers want. To use the vocabulary of the economist, vertical integration with organizational feedback enhances productivity throughout the Bell System.

Touche, Ross & Co., acting as consultants for the staff of the Federal Communications Commission, made a study of how this corporate structure affects costs for telephone service. According to their report, written in 1974:

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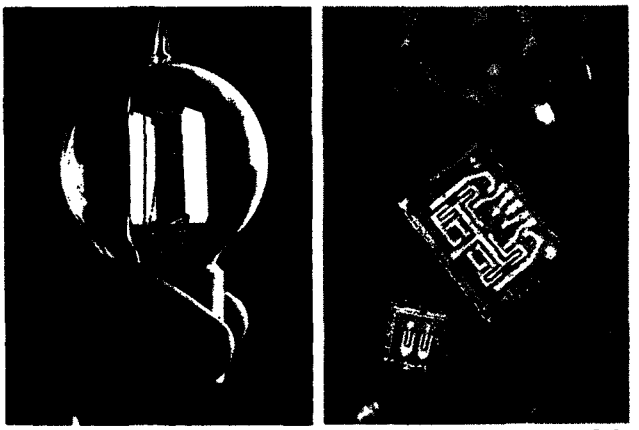
Western Electric's efficient performance has resulted in lower costs than otherwise would have been incurred. Because of Western's pricing policies and practices, these lower costs have not increased profits, but have been passed on to operating companies in the form of lower



Western Electric's first commercially successful vacuum tube (left) was used in 1915 in the amplifiers that made possible the first transcontinental telephone call. Solid-state electronics, begun at Bell Labs, makes it possible for tiny integrated circuits (right) to do the work of many vacuum tubes.

prices....The effect of the interrelationship between Bell and Western Electric is to operate Western, not as a manufacturing concern, but as an integral part of a vertically integrated communications firm. These interrelationships result in a favorable impact upon Western's costs, prices and service to operating companies.

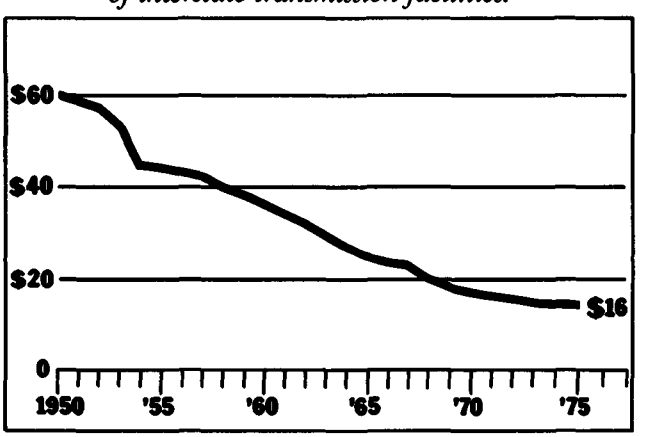
Another major factor affecting productivity is investment in new technology—in research and development. Bell Laboratories is recognized worldwide as one of the leading development and research institutions anywhere. The achievements of Bell Labs people have won two Nobel prizes, one for the demonstration of the wave nature of matter, and the other for the invention of the transistor.

The search for new and better technology has always been a part of the telephone industry. On March 10, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas A. Watson achieved that famous first telephone message, "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you." At once they began to improve the instrument, and make it more usable. The goal, then as now, was to provide good telephone service at a price almost every American could afford.

The effect of research and engineering on costs can be seen most readily by considering how it has changed methods of transmitting calls. Bell Labs scientists found ways to send many conversations simultaneously through a pair of wires, and later through coaxial cables. They incorporated microwave radio into transmission systems for long distance calls.

In just the last quarter century, such improvements have reduced the average cost per circuit mile of the Bell System nationwide long distance network from $60 to $16. (See graph.) The cost of the newest coaxial cable system is less than $2 per circuit mile.

Average cost per circuit mile of interstate transmission facilities.



But Bell engineers are not satisfied. Already they are preparing the technology for even greater economies and capacities when call volumes reach a level to justify using it. The new Comstar domestic satellite—being used jointly by the Bell System and GTE Satellite Corporation—in addition to standard communications traffic will

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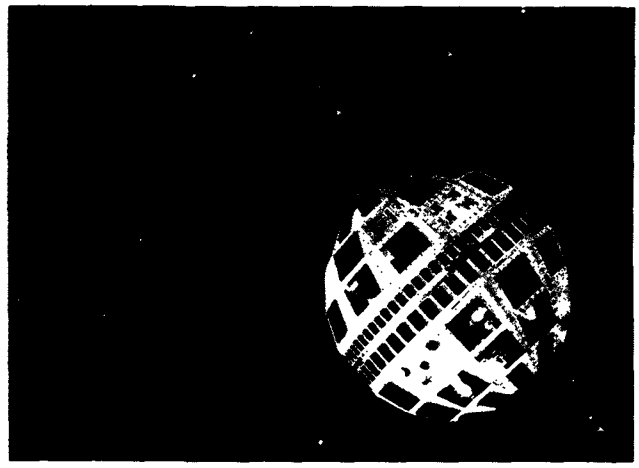
beam experimental signals to an extraordinarily precise antenna so that Bell Laboratories scientists can investigate super-high frequencies that could provide increased satellite capacity in the future. And new systems, using millimeter waveguides or laser light and glass fibers, are expected to reduce transmission costs and add new capacity also.

Another simple way to measure how technology improves productivity is to look at the number of Bell System people required to serve each 10,000 telephones. In 1925 it took 246. In 1958 it took 148. Today it takes 65.

Finally, the Bell System seeks to improve productivity by improving the methods used to manage the telephone business. For instance, the teamwork of Western Electric and Bell Labs people was cited earlier. To facilitate their interaction, some Bell Labs people work adjacent to Western Electric plants. A significant reduction has resulted in the time required to get a new design from drawing board to actual production.

The Bell System is placing greater emphasis on computerized information retrieval for the mountain of data connected with serving 118.5 million telephones. It is moving toward a standardized format for recording and storing data, to make more efficient use of computers.

The Bell System is placing greater emphasis on new methods of employee training, on the restructuring of jobs, and on



The Bell Systems's Telstar® satellite demonstrated the feasibility of using space satellites for communications.

efforts to build more responsibility, challenge and satisfaction into jobs at all levels. Experience to date indicates that these changes help people do a better job, reduce employee turnover, and consequently improve productivity as well.

That is exactly the result one would expect, on the basis of the 1927 Hawthorne findings. The Bell System has changed a lot since 1927. But it still emphasizes people, research, manufacturing efficiency and an organizational structure that fosters teamwork.

Data issued by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics show that overall the productivity of the telephone industry has increased 50% since 1965. That is two-and-a-half times the productivity increase of the United States economy as a whole.

In that same decade, the cost of living rose 75%. Telephone rates for local service went up only 40%. And interstate long distance rates went up about 4%. Now 95% of all American homes have telephones.

One Bell System. It works.

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strength." But do a few words, in an election year, mean anything? What was the reaction in Congress to the "Churchillian" threats against Cuba? . . .

America's economic and technological capacities *could* be used as leverage against Soviet expansionism and assorted mischief, but it would require a strong and truly independent President to carry out such policies. Today it is not the fellow-travelers of old, but capitalist America, the corporations and the wheat barons, who resist the interference of politics in their business dealings with the USSR.

Mr. Podhoretz writes off the elites due to their "Finlandization from within," and pins his hopes on the masses who responded enthusiastically to Daniel P. Moynihan's gutsy performance at the UN. But the presidential primaries are not very encouraging in this respect. . . . There seems to be no awareness at all that the next four years may constitute America's Rubicon—the outcome of the election may well depend on the quality of a smile. . . . What role will Mr. Podhoretz's brilliant and stirring analysis play in this fateful upcoming election? Is it the destiny of the clairvoyant intellectual to remain a prophet crying in the wilderness?

BENNO WEISER VARON
Brookline, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read and reread Norman Podhoretz's article with interest and gratification. It . . . may become a turning point in American political thinking.

In the course of my frequent visits to the U.S. I have sensed a creeping mood of Findlandization, accompanied by an outpouring of rhetoric on social justice, equality, and other public virtues, all of which cannot cover up a downgrading of liberty as the supreme human value. By alerting public opinion to the short-sightedness of the conservative isolationists on the one hand and to the mythological world in which the liberals have found refuge on the other, the article will, I am sure, make many thoughtful and rational Americans reconsider their position vis-à-vis the outside world as it is, and not as it is conceived in the liberal cosmology. . . .

S.Z. ABRAMOV
Tel Aviv, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The purpose of this letter is to tell you how much I enjoyed Norman Podhoretz's article in the April issue. It is a brilliantly conceived, marvelously well-reasoned essay. . . .

MARK GOODSON
Goodson-Todman Productions
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

For the title alone of Norman Podhoretz's article, . . . he must certainly have guaranteed himself a place in the world to come. COMMENTARY will undoubtedly be deluged by letters of protest from outraged leftists and liberals against what they will see as sacrilege committed upon their most cherished beliefs by Mr. Podhoretz's essay on the new isolationism. We therefore want you to know that at least a few of us out here in the provinces, the farthest reaches of the disapora, applaud your courage in dissenting (as Lionel Trilling used to say) from the conformity of dissent. . . .

EDWARD ALEXANDER
ROBERT J. LOEWENBERG
DEBORAH LIPSTADT
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is surely no accident that Norman Podhoretz's article was promptly and enthusiastically embraced by William F. Buckley, Jr., who patronizingly presented him in his widely syndicated column as "the lesson for today" while making sure to point out that he, Buckley, was "five years" ahead in the same endeavor. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz recommends a familiar scenario: suppression at home and reckless adventurism abroad, including interference in the internal affairs of other countries whenever and wherever we, or our unaccountable CIA, deem it advisable, all in the name of the anti-Communism of old, and with an amazing replication of the attitudes and stances of the 50's. We must be wary of those who are "soft on Communism" and forgive the sins of those who can be relied upon to fight "Communists and their sympathizers, real and alleged, inside the government and out." The Podhoretz-Buckley-COMMENTARY-*National Review* alliance will rally us to fight the Communist enemy, and we are not to worry excessively about our personal and political liberties here at home, or about pro-Communist . . . casualties abroad. . . .

The fact is that Mr. Podhoretz's piece does a grave disservice to the cause of democracy in general and to the Jewish people in particular (when repression comes, are we not always among the first victims?) by encouraging the forces of reaction both at home and abroad. While failing to advance a single viable suggestion for a policy of extending democracy and opposing Communist spread, he offers the best of ammunition to those who would destroy democracy wherever it exists.

MEYER RANGELL
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found myself in agreement with the first part of Norman Podhoretz's article in which he attacks many Democratic liberals for becoming isolationists but not with his attempt to place the Republicans and particularly Henry Kissinger in the same camp. . . .

It seems to me that Mr. Podhoretz is neglecting the facts of life. The Democrats control Congress—after the 1974 elections by a nearly 2-1 majority. With the isolationist wing in control, how else could Kissinger operate in the real world but make the best deals he could and ask for as much help from Congress as he could get? (He didn't get any at all on Portugal or Angola.)

The Democrats should face up to their isolationist policy in relation to the Soviet Union and the CIA, but it seems to me unfair to include the Republicans in this camp. . . . I'm a registered Democrat but I don't like the way the Democratic party has been acting in foreign affairs.

Why not call for a change in the Democratic foreign-policy position . . . and for a strong bipartisan foreign policy like the kind we had under FDR?

WALTER J. SCHLOSS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I must disagree with Norman Podhoretz's view that the present mood in the United States represents a trend toward isolationism. . . . Though I sympathize with his quest for a rational explanation of the causes of our apparent national malaise, there are several facets of the situation he either understates or ignores.

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Twenty-five years ago the United States showed the same tragic "lack of wisdom" which he mentions in his article and for which we are still paying today, but for which the liberals cannot be blamed. I am referring to Washington's unfortunate intransigence in judging the developments in China at the end of World War II, or rather misjudging them. Mr. Podhoretz sloughs this off with a brief aside . . . [but] unless we fully grasp the magnitude of our mistaken policy in the late 40's we will continue to lash out blindly and senselessly at scapegoats, be they liberals or conservatives, to suit our arguments, and still not arrive at the true reason for the present malaise.

I am not an apologist for the behavior of the Chinese Communists, who have committed their share of crimes. I am familiar with their ruthless demographic policies in Tibet and Inner Mongolia, for example. [Nonetheless,] the progress in the economic and foreign-policy spheres in China since the Chinese . . . Communists took over simply could not have been achieved by any of the governments we have seen in China in this century.

Our experts . . . had told us in the years immediately following World War II that the Communists seemed to possess some of the means needed for the solution of the chaos which reigned in China. At least they felt that the Communists could not be ignored or shunted aside. Yet these American diplomats were not only ignored but maligned and persecuted and only recently have we half-heartedly rehabilitated them. The China policy we adopted was not the work of liberals . . . but of the China lobby . . . unwilling to differentiate among the Communists; a group which saw only black or white—a monolithic free world faced by a similarly monolithic Communist world. . . . For this short-sightedness, we paid with a war in Korea (started with the cooperation of the Russians, not the Chinese) and a war in Vietnam, a country—even if Communist—with a historical distrust of the Chinese. In the latter instance we undermined the resilience, if not the stability, of the various Southeast Asian societies who had over the centuries learned in their own way to withstand the pressure of whoever ruled China. We thus created the very dominoes we were afraid would fall and which now have fallen and will continue to fall. What is even worse, we wasted a good deal of our strength, which was and is needed to oppose Soviet imperialism. None of the above was the work of the liberals. . . .

Nor can the liberals be blamed for the situation in the Middle East and OPEC. Here the United States government had the opportunity to show its mettle, but unfortunately our government chose an attitude toward the Persian Gulf potentates which was both disgraceful and harmful to our national interests. And needlessly so. To whom would the feudal government of Saudi Arabia and the oppressive government of Iran turn if we were to withhold our support? . . .

Another instance where Washington preferred an unnecessary show of weakness and surrender for which no liberal can be blamed is the Arab boycott. This insidious attempt by the Arabs to divide us could have been nipped in the bud by a clear and strong statement from Washington that it is illegal for any American individual or business firm to cooperate with the boycott. The Arab countries, those that have money and wish to progress, cannot do without American know-how whatever "other arrangements" they claim they will make. By its failure to stand firm against the boycott . . . Washington, not the liberals, has contributed to diminishing our stature in the world. . . .

Yes, it is ironic that we are asked by some Communist countries and their sympathizers in others to protect them from Soviet domination. . . . But what does that prove? That intervention in Portugal and Angola would have been right? Had we done so, as events have shown, we would again have been acting from a "lack of wisdom." . . . If these Communists want protection against Soviet domination, let them develop their own strategies and means. For all we know they may yet come to join us on the side of liberty and democracy, but that decision must be theirs alone. As far as the United States is concerned . . . we must first learn and digest the lessons of the past three decades. (Kissinger is still working on the 19th century.) We must regain our strength and try to recapture the spirit and goals on which this nation was founded. . . .

WALTER A. SHELDON
Lido Beach, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In Norman Podhoretz's excellent article . . . he outlines clearly how general misunderstanding of the significance of the Indochina war has led both liberals and conservatives for opposite reasons into a kind of mirror-image isolationism. As he notes, the American failure in Vietnam "is an argument not against [our] purposes but against the lack of wisdom with which they were in that instance pursued." In other words, our failure reflected the inadequacies of our means and strategy, not the immorality of our ends or the strength of our will.

Why then do we persist on both the liberal and conservative sides in refusing to examine what went wrong and why? The deafening national silence on the subject portends ill for the future. We have been bruised and like humans we try to bury our hurts, but . . . emotional and spiritual wounds need air to heal. Burying them in the subconscious risks internal festering and later eruption in unexpected directions, one of which is clearly outlined in Mr. Podhoretz's article.

On the one hand, as he indicates, liberals feel a sense of guilt because it was liberals who led the United States into the Vietnam war. But rather than seeking to isolate the specific errors made, they tend to seek a kind of class atonement by denouncing the whole post-World War II international philosophy of the United States—which they largely designed. Conservatives, on the other hand, tend to focus on the final revulsion of the American people against the war as evidence of our presumed lack of will. Actually, there is no sound reason for liberals to reject everything they have stood for in order to avoid uncovering a few specific non-malicious, although devastating, errors. Indeed, not only the liberals but the whole country would be far healthier with a comprehensive airing and analysis of this most ambiguous of wars. To fail to conduct such an analysis is to deny ourselves the one advantage to be extracted from the experience—the lessons of history. . . . In a sense Vietnam is for liberals what Watergate has been for conservatives, except for one principal difference. In the case of Watergate, the truth finally did emerge, the errors and misdeeds were exposed, and those responsible were identified. This process was a bitter one for con-

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servatives since it happened to an administration with which they were emotionally linked. But in the process of exposure, there was a parallel process of cauterization. Unfortunately, in the case of Vietnam, the actual errors have not been adequately exposed nor those responsible adequately identified. Thus Vietnam remains a buried wound. . . .

By way of illustration, it is not difficult to point to a few such errors which did contribute to the disaster in Vietnam. To begin with, we failed to distinguish clearly between that part of the war which was an aggression from North Vietnam and that part which was genuine internal insurgency, and as a result, we committed our forces in ways that were not effective against aggression but involved us in the insurgency aspects of the war in which we had no business.

Secondly, we failed to distinguish clearly between limited war, such as occurred in Korea where we had a direct, open confrontation with the enemy, and guerrilla war which is entirely different.

Thirdly, we sought to isolate South Vietnam through the neutralization of Laos under the Geneva Accords of 1962. This was an early attempt at détente through negotiation between Communist and non-Communist powers, great and small. It was a worthwhile attempt, but when it became obvious, as it did almost immediately, that the Communist side had no intention of implementing the agreement, we erred in not acting effectively either to force implementation of the agreement or to take effective action to protect South Vietnam.

Fourthly, we acted on the basis of fond but unrealistic hopes rather than on the basis of an empirical analysis of the Soviet role.

Finally, in the Laos agreements we confused neutrality with the concept of coalition of Communist and non-Communist parties. Neutrality is sometimes possible and indeed a genuinely neutral nation can sometimes perform a useful buffer role. There is no history more dismal than that of "coalitions" between Communist and non-Communist political parties.

If explored fully, these and many other serious points could lead to a national understanding of what happened in Vietnam. Such an exploration would lead to a recognition of the fact that what went

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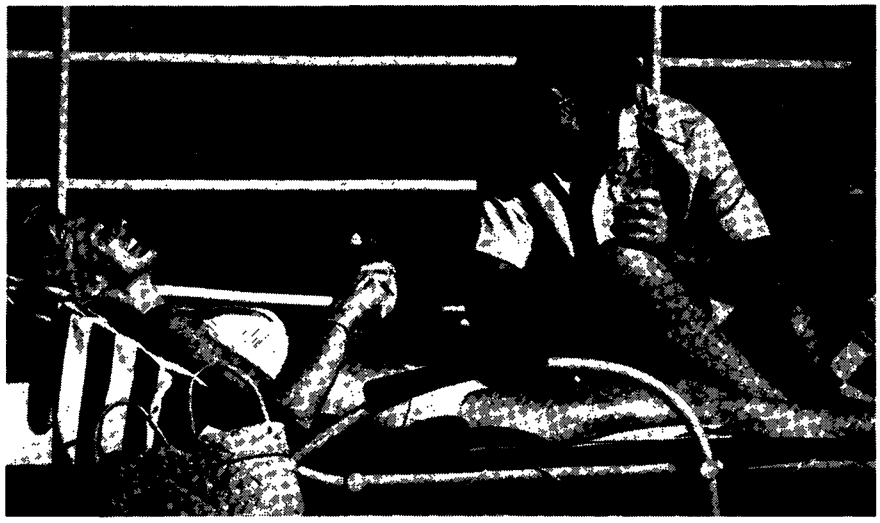

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wrong in Vietnam consisted of some errors of judgment on the part of some people. It did not, however, consist of the moral bankruptcy of the whole United States government and the American people and our policy since World War II. Were the real lesson to be clearly drawn, both liberals and conservatives could be disabused of what Mr. Podhoretz has called the "isolationist lesson that we can no longer do anything to make the world safe for democracy—anything either to check the spread of Communism or 'to assure the survival and the success of liberty.'"

NORMAN B. HANNAH
American Consul General
Consulate General of the
United States of America
Sydney, Australia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I hasten to congratulate Norman Podhoretz on his definitive analysis of the U.S. posture in the world today. . . . He has put it all together with precision and clarity.

Mr. Podhoretz may take heart from knowing that many of his readers welcome his courage in standing his ground against those who "see a CIA agent under every bed" very much in the way Ed Murrow once stood his ground against the followers of Joe McCarthy who saw a Communist under every bed.

GEORGE FIELD
Jamesburg, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"That the American military intervention in Vietnam ended in failure," Mr. Podhoretz writes, ". . . is an argument not against [our] purposes, but against the lack of wisdom with which they were in that instance pursued." But he is being less than realistic . . . for that is simply not how the Vietnam war is taught, or more significantly, how it is remembered. . . . The war . . . is now perceived as the most corrupt and rapacious event in our history. As a result of it . . . there has been obliterated in our society any sense of moral justification for being where we were and doing what we were doing. The generation of Daniel P. Moynihan, for example, grew up in an era when American liberty was seen as threatened. . . . But when this generation relinquishes its authority it will be replaced by a group that has been marred by the social tremors of the Vietnam debacle. . . .

What will happen when this group become makers of policy? Mr. Podhoretz overlooks this question when he concludes what is otherwise an excellent analysis with the assumption that our moral authority, or what formerly had been associated with that authority, can be revived. "Making the world safe for democracy" is an idea of noble design, but because of current social thinking it may well be impossible. . . .

JOHN J. COX
Floral Park, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The basic strategy the U.S. should formulate and implement centers on containment of Soviet expansionism. There is only one country today that poses a threat, acute or latent, to the U.S.—the Soviet Union.

It has been said that the critics of one-sided détente undermine Soviet "moderates" and play into the hands of the Kremlin militarists. This is nonsense. During the so-called détente, the USSR has made more gains—politically and diplomatically—than in all the years from 1948-69. What more could the militarists have achieved? . . .

Détente, therefore, must clearly be reconceptualized in such a way as to help minimize Soviet adventurism. It may be difficult, if not impossible, for the U.S. to try to persuade key West European countries and Japan to adopt a common policy that would deny the USSR Western technology should the Soviets continue to fish in troubled waters, but attempts to agree on such a policy should receive the highest priority. The U.S. alone cannot run an effective embargo. The continued presence of U.S. troops in Europe, and commercial agreements with Japan, are potent bargaining weapons—if used with circumspection yet with firmness.

The U.S., concurrently, must try to normalize its relations with Communist China even further. In terms of arresting Soviet expansionism, it is not relevant whether or not one personally countenances China's form of government. The system, in a modified form, is likely to survive Mao's death, and the U.S. has to address realities. China will not be a genuine superpower for decades to come, but competition between the Soviet Union and China in Asia and parts of Africa is another possible deterrent to Soviet hegemony. . . .

We must realize too that American democracy is not exportable; we have found out that it did not take hold in lands with different national traits, customs, and aspirations. We are not abdicating as champions of democracy when we restrain our penchant for ramming our interpretation of how a country should be governed down the throat of unreceptive, even resentful, audiences.

There are scores of countries, most of them, in fact, which cannot make meaningful economic progress without a tinge of authoritarianism. Even we, in America, who often equate efficiency with potential loss of freedom, increasingly complain about inefficiency in government. In most of the developing countries, even a quasi-democratic form of government carries in its wake inefficiency, corruption, and an unlimited spoils system. In such countries, to talk about "freedom of choice" is a travesty, since a handful of people rule over apathetic masses. Hence the advent of military and one-party regimes—ostensibly to weed out corruption, but, in reality, to join the game of musical chairs.

Yet in some countries, the military has made modest progress. Again, no matter how unpalatable a strongman rule may be to us personally, who are we to advocate that the people of, let us say, Panama (which has a Left-leaning military regime) take back the Arias family and other *latifundistas* who had milked the people for decades? Or that Brazil should choose another João Goulart who led it to economic and political chaos?

It may not be desirable, but it happens to be true—at least for now—that our ability to influence the form of government a country chooses is severely restricted. As we have our hands full coping with our prime adversary, the Soviet Union, is it in our national interest to antagonize other countries by lambasting their system of government? . . .

While the U.S. must be flexible as to the form of government in countries of only marginal strategic importance to us, it must stand firm about the inadvisability of Communist participation in NATO governments. . . . Suffice it to say that while "national" Communism may be "acceptable," albeit unwelcome, in Yugoslavia, it is fraught with too many perils in countries supposedly offering a

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common defensive front to Soviet imperialism. . . .

MILAN B. SKACEL
North Bergen, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The quotation Norman Podhoretz attributes to Trotsky—"A curse on all Bolsheviks, they bring a dryness and a hardness into life"—was, I believe, a little different in the original. According to Isaac Deutscher in *The Prophet Armed*, Trotsky is supposed to have remarked to his Marxist wife, Sokolovskaya, "A curse upon all of you who want to bring dryness and hardness into all the relations of life."

ALBERT L. WEEKS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Norman Podhoretz's article extremely well-reasoned and thought-provoking, but unfortunately, I cannot agree with his optimistic conclusion.

Since he wrote it, Senator Henry Jackson, the only Democratic aspirant who proposed to take a hard line against Russia and, by implication, to restore America's power, has been repudiated at the polls. Thus, we will now have to choose between President Ford, who is at least partly to blame for the fix we are in, and Jimmy Carter, a charismatic individual who has no firm opinions on any subject. . . .

Just who will get America moving again?

FREDERICK I. GRUN
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Norman Podhoretz may or may not be justified in despairing about the future: he is certainly correct about the post-Vietnam erosion of American will to take on the Soviet Union today. . . .

It is unfortunate for Henry Kissinger that he is serving as Secretary of State at a time when the American public is suffering, one hopes only temporarily, from political exhaustion. His Moscow counterpart has no such handicap.

Basically, the Ford-Kissinger policy is, in Kissinger's words, designed to prevent Soviet expansion but also to build a pattern of relations in which the Soviet Union "will always confront penalties for aggression and also acquire growing incentives for restraint." This is a policy difficult to explain to an apathetic public, but also one which any administration would find essential to adopt today. In an age of possible thermonuclear extinction, the search for peace is a moral imperative. Without it, nothing else will be of enduring value.

Ever since our withdrawal from Vietnam, Congress has done its best to restrict the Ford administration's room for maneuvering on foreign policy, smugly overlooking the fact that both the House and the Senate approved the Vietnam operation for years, and voted the funds necessary to keep it going. More recently, Congress has pursued the imprudent policy of preventing the administration from operating, either covertly or in any other way, in what Kissinger has termed the "gray zone" between peace and war, thereby making it difficult for the Chief Executive to deal with "wars of national liberation" sponsored by either the Soviets or the Chinese in regional areas where American interests are directly or indirectly involved. Clipping the administration's diplomatic wings has become a pastime for critics from both the political Left and Right, including the presidential hopefuls.

It has not been helpful to Kissinger that we, as a people, have so strong an inclination for straightforwardness that we become impatient with diplomacy, whose essential attributes are, necessarily, ambiguity and compromise. However, we should remember that the alternative to diplomacy is war or a retreat to isolationism.

Fortunately, we have in Kissinger a man amply endowed with a theoretical understanding of foreign policy, and the demonstrated practical ability to conduct it. . . . At this critical time, our political leaders should broadly support his diplomatic efforts, instead of making him a whipping boy for their many frustrations. . . .

Let's be clear as to the facts. The Ford-Kissinger policy is not based on the premise that we can trust the Soviet Union. Rather, it is based on the assumption that with an equilibrium of strength—political, economic, and military—Soviet expansionism can be prevented

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without the two superpowers sliding into a dangerous situation that might terminate in a military confrontation. This is a workable policy to the extent that Congress and the critics allow Secretary Kissinger maneuverability. . . .

It is time for all of us to recognize that those who are unjustly attacking Secretary Kissinger are seriously undermining the diplomatic strength of the United States, that our President and his chief advisers are men of competence and integrity, that we have to live with some of our problems because they are either insoluble or are of the type that can be resolved only gradually, and, finally, that self-flagellation is no substitute for political rationalism.

ERNEST T. CLOUGH
Big Rapids, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The basic idea contained in . . . Norman Podhoretz's article is that liberals are "unaware of the extent of Soviet ambitions" and are cohabiting with conservatives in a sort of fantasy world. In this dream world, liberals and conservatives are said to imagine that Americans can blithely ignore the authoritarian and expansionist nature of the Soviet state and pursue a "business as usual" non-policy. It is then pointed out that this isolationism is, in truth, a withdrawal from reality whose expression in actual policy could have the result of the ultimate loss of our fundamental rights. Mr. Podhoretz argues persuasively that withdrawal to our own shores would present us with a situation of being a democratic island in an authoritarian world, a situation which could not last long.

But who seriously argues that we should do this? I am no political scientist and it is possible that isolationist policies have been proposed in publications which I do not read, but such proposals have not been prominent in the national debate. While Mr. Podhoretz raises many valid and thoughtful points, he does not do justice to the other point of view.

For example, . . . many of us opposed the American actions in Vietnam on several grounds, the most compelling of which were that it was obvious that neither Soviet nor Chinese expansionism was involved (except insofar as American policies drove the Vietnamese toward the Soviets) and that Americans were doing things to the people who lived in that part of the world which Americans, of all people, should never do to anybody under any circumstances, ever. The repellent element in our policy was not only that we did these things, but also that we did them for no sensible reason, because in no sense was American national security ever involved.

Despite the impression given by Mr. Podhoretz, it is questionable whether American democratic ideals . . . have had any but a sporadic and minor place in American foreign policy since World War II. Rather than favoring something (democratic ideals), the major policy trend has been against something (Communism). Probably the reason for such a strong emphasis on negation has to do with the protection of our economic interests. However, to millions of people the promises by Communism of equal justice and the end of economic hardship make the Soviet system appear to be an attractive alternative to an America which appears to have forgotten its own ideals and seems to operate on the international scene in an exploitative and, at times, cruel manner. . . . We see the Soviets to be exploitative and cruel, but they, at least, present to concerned Third World inhabitants a promise of the end of economic privation, social disorganization, and injustice which American foreign policy does not.

Consider, for example, the situation of Italy. For years it has been common knowledge that Italian society has been locked into a morass of worsening corruption and social injustice which has been aided and abetted by the rigid and narrow mentality of the ruling Christian Democratic elite. The Communists are widely regarded as offering the only chance of reform. . . . What should American policy be in this situation? Can we come to anything but grief by subversion of the Italian political process for no purpose other than to prolong this injustice? Is there any way here that we could align ourselves in favor of social justice and human rights? In the extreme case of having to accept Italian Communism as the only viable force toward social progress, can we at least attempt to influence it in the direction of human rights and in opposition to Soviet national power? Certainly American policy should oppose Communism, but wedding our policy to the fate of unjust and obsolete right-wing governments is practically suicidal. . . .

It would seem to be only fair for Mr. Podhoretz . . . to have pointed out that the situation of American versus Soviet power is more complex than that of opposed military powers, and that those who advocate the exploitation of trends toward nationalist Communisms where democratic alternatives do not exist are not advocating isolationism. We should formulate a policy directed toward opposing the expansion of foreign powers whose expansionism threatens us, but a more flexible policy toward powers which do not threaten us. We should support human rights and democratic systems where they exist or can be developed, but where this alternative does not exist we should attempt to coopt the authoritarian progressive movements from the Soviets. None of this is isolation or *de facto* capitulation. . . .

[DR.] RONALD ABRAMSON
Tufts University School of Medicine
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Norman Podhoretz's article is not convincing . . . because he doesn't prove that Vietnam, Angola, Portugal, and Communism in Italy are much of a threat to our survival. Then, too, he doesn't give any hard thought to what he would have done in each of these places.

I wish he had turned his usual cool eye to these questions of strategy and brought them down to earth. . . . Mr. Podhoretz's view of Communism, if held by most of our citizens, would harm us more than the present practices of Communist power; the resultant increase in fear and suspicion would paralyze us by a kind of psychological nerve gas. . . . What is the reason for this hysteria? . . . George Orwell gives the answer in his "Second Thoughts on James Burnham":

> . . . The English intelligentsia in 1940, on the whole, were more defeatist than the mass of the people. . . . Their morale was worse because their imaginations were stronger. . . . Such a manner of thinking is bound to lead to mistaken prophecies. . . .

JAMES C. WHITE
Minneapolis College of Art and Design
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz provides a vital, much-needed analysis . . . yet some additional points need making. . . .

U. S. domestic travail does indeed sap the national will in very specific ways. The *Wall Street Journal* notes, for example, that our poor receive ever greater transfer funds. Though the *Journal* does not say it, a birthrate approaching Asian, African, and South American numbers is the cause. . . . Until the entire arsenal of Western technology, science, and art are brought to bear on the problem of population explosion . . . the West will indeed be endangered. The danger is real, all the more so because it is largely unidentified in the media.

ARTHUR DARACK
Consumers Digest
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on an excellent article. . . . There should follow an essay on how the elites became guilty and unconfident in their . . . leadership role. . . .

The college professors—not a terribly self-confident group to begin with, beleaguered with teaching and writing duties—didn't want trouble. But relatively small groups of anti-war protesters were able to turn them around precisely by "making trouble." I think fear of verbal and physical violence was a factor in the conversion of many on the campuses, as was also the fact that Americans cannot abide being disliked by anyone. . . .

EDWIN HARWOOD
New College
Sarasota, Florida

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Let me say, first of all, how grateful I am for the generosity with which so many of these letters treat "Making the World Safe for Communism" and how gratified I have been by the thoughtfulness of the response in general. I had, frankly, expected that there would be much name-calling and much vituperative misrepresentation of my argument, but very little of that kind of thing has turned up either in the letters I have received (of which the ones printed above are a representative sample) or the published comments I have seen. This in itself can be taken as a sign that things may not be quite as bad as Mr. Varon, Mr. Cox, and Mr. Grun all fear. A year or two ago an article as outspokenly anti-Communist as mine would almost certainly have been greeted with many more letters like Mr. Rangell's accusing me in effect of calling for a new McCarthyism, or like Mr. White's accusing me of hysteria and paranoia, or like Dr. Abramson's accusing me of failing to place sufficient emphasis on the sins and crimes of the United States. Today, however, it is evidently becoming possible to raise the issue of Communism without being shouted down or merely vilified and dismissed by McCarthyites of the Left.

If this were all, it would be much too thin a reed on which to lean, but there are other encouraging signs, some of them quite substantial. Unlike Mr. Varon, Mr. Schloss, and Mr. Grun, who see no hope in the presidential primaries, I think that the debate over defense and détente (in which *both* parties have been engaged) has uncovered and furthered a new realism about Soviet expansionism. Thus, while there has been much argument over whether or not the United States is falling behind in military power, there has been almost no effort to deny the facts of a build-up on the Soviet side. And so far as the American role in the world is concerned, Mr. Grun and Mr. Schloss might take a measure of comfort from the following report by Stephen S. Rosenfeld in the Washington *Post* (June 18):

> Sen. Henry Jackson may have lost the battle for the Democratic presidential nomination but—to judge by the foreign and defense chapters of the Democratic platform worked out in Washington this week—he has largely won the policy war. . . . To a striking degree, the international affairs sections in the platform reflect the particular combination of toughness and idealism of Scoop Jackson, his political ally Daniel P. Moynihan, the Jackson-oriented Coalition for a Democratic Majority, and some of the contributors to COMMENTARY magazine. . . . The result is a document that firmly . . . asserts the principle that the linchpin of American policy is the survival of freedom around the world.

And Rosenfeld goes on to speak of a "value constituency" in foreign affairs which "is not limited to Democrats" or to conservatives. Indeed, he says, "the politicians of both parties are Jacksonians in foreign affairs."

I would not wish to encourage complacency on this point, but it

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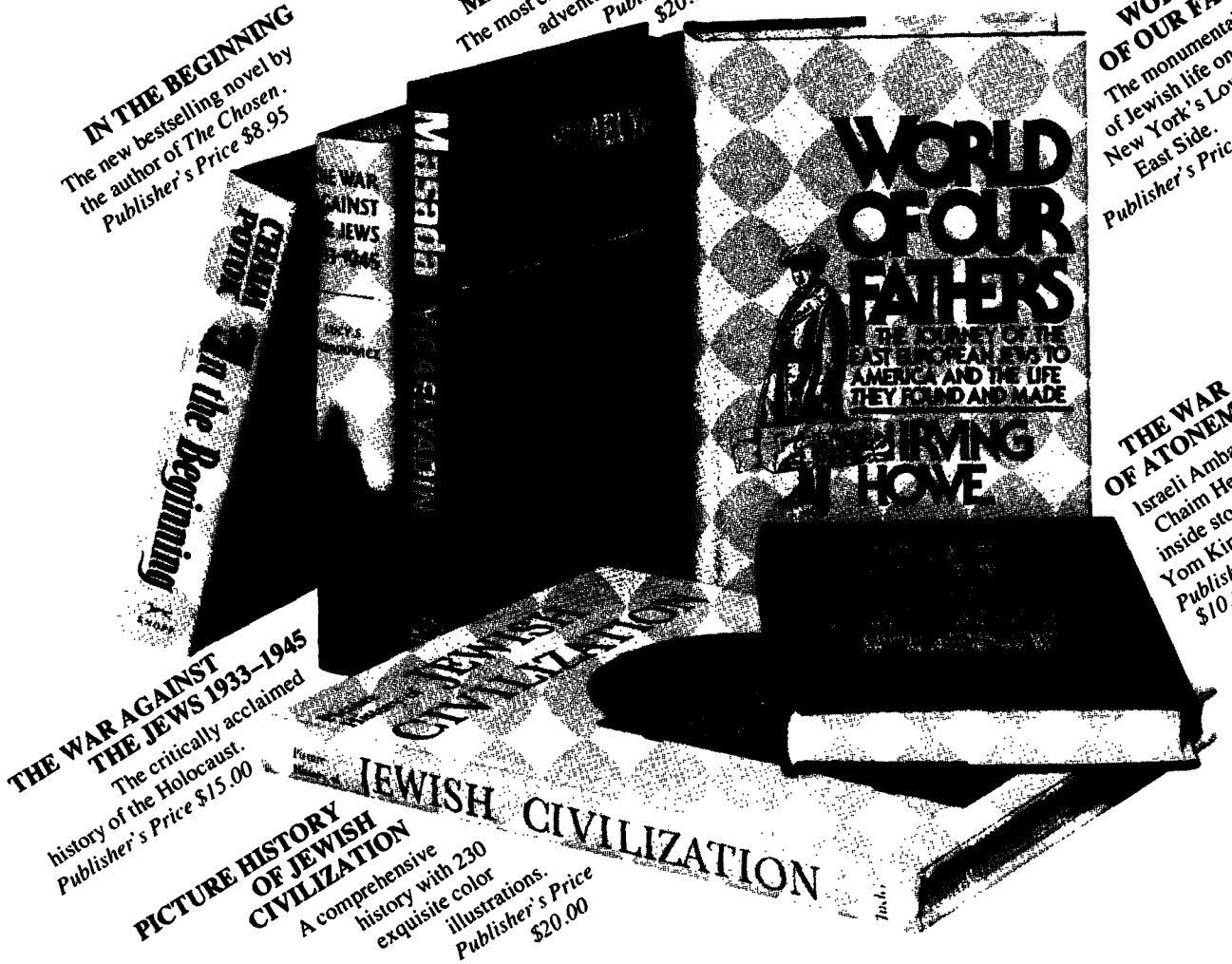

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may just be that the isolationist tide has begun to recede. Certainly there is a growing willingness in the United States to recognize the existence of an international threat. What we have not achieved as yet is any great degree of clarity about the precise nature of the threat. Is it, as Mr. Sheldon and Mr. Skacel and many other people argue, mainly or entirely Soviet imperialism; or is it —as I tried to say in my article— Communism in general? If it is Soviet imperialism, then obviously the policy I called "saving Communism from the Russians" becomes plausible. We should help build up Communist China and we should extend our friendship to the Communist parties of other countries to the point even of sponsoring any national Communist movement which declares or even hints at independence of Moscow.

There is of course a case to be made for such a policy on grounds of *Realpolitik*. In fact, it is exactly the same case which used to be made for supporting right-wing regimes whose help we needed, or thought we needed, to contain Soviet expansionism. As such, it is open—although few of its advocates seem to realize this—to the same objections on moral grounds that were and are advanced against American support for right-wing regimes which trample on human rights. I will not here repeat what I said in my article about the curse which Communism, whether controlled by Moscow or not, has brought to every people which has been forced to live under it (though I recommend to Mr. Sheldon, who thinks the Communists have done well in certain respects in China, the three-part series in *Worldview*, May-June-July 1976, by Miriam and Ivan D. London). Nor will I rehearse my reasons for being skeptical of the democratic pretensions of Communist parties which have not yet achieved power (on this point, see Walter Laqueur's article on p. 25 below). But I would urge Dr. Abramson, who is not an isolationist, to take another look at what I tried to say about the dangers of "Finlandization from within" if he still wishes to know why allying ourselves with Communist regimes is even less desirable than allying ourselves with non-"progressive" regimes if our objective is—as he and I agree it should be—to make the world as safe for democracy as we prudently and possibly can.

Translating Bach

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Rothstein's interesting and informative article, "Bach in the Original" [May], is both timeless and timely; I have a feeling that general interest in this subject has grown tremendously in recent decades and is likely to continue to grow. . . .

The Musical Heritage Society in this country is publishing or republishing recordings of Bach cantatas in large numbers, not in numerical order, but rather in an order that corresponds, at times at least, to liturgical proximity. Mr. Rothstein calls the notes accompanying the Telefunken recordings exhaustive, but MHS recordings of the last few years have come with far more exhaustive notes and analyses. They are useful, though perhaps in some respects they go a bit *too* far and occasionally I would disagree with them. Their besetting trouble, however (now to some extent remedied), is a translator who is unfamiliar with musical terminology and who, in translating the incredibly detailed, erudite, and in places fanciful German notes, manages among other things to confuse "major" and "augmented" or "minor" and "diminished.". . .

The MHS records come, alas, without scores . . . though with useful examples in musical notation to help the analysis. As far as I remember, their translations of Bach's texts, a far more important matter than the commentators' or analysts' texts, is closer to the original than Telefunken's.

The two examples Mr. Rothstein quotes from the Telefunken translations by Henry S. Drinker sound as though those lovers of authenticity have stopped short of taking care about faithful, i.e., literal, translations of Bach's original *texts*. I suspect they have fallen into the Drinker trap. In the case which Mr. Rothstein mentions of the "ecumenicizing" substitution of "Peace be unto all Mankind" for *"Friede über Israel"* I recognize a Drinker line; in "Dearest Jesu sore I need Thee" for *"Liebster Jesu, mein Verlangen"* the scansion makes me suspect it. Drinker made translations for *singing*; and those, of course, have to scan like the original; he even made them rhyme more or less like the original.

Faithfulness to scansion in a translation is bound to mean infidelity to the literal meaning of the original and inability to get Bach's key words into their right musical places. Those key words were not just nouns and verbs like "snake" and "descend" which could be, in a manner of speaking, pictorially represented in the score, but pronouns, significant conjunctions, and the very grammatical and syntactical structure of a sentence. The original linguistic text must be taken seriously (as Bach took it seriously), even if we think, even if Albert Schweitzer thought, that some of the libretti were in doubtful taste. . . .

Mr. Rothstein rightly stresses the *drama* of Bach's cantatas which is connected with Bach's homiletic intent. He was a preacher and probably was and certainly remains a far more effective one than the parson with the purely verbal sermon. But for the discovery or rediscovery of Bach's religious rhetoric we need faithful, *literal* translations, translations not for singing but for telling what the German original means.

This whole, rather important, complex of questions is treated more fully in my article, "Bach's Way With Words," in the forthcoming *Essays in Honor of Jacob Klein*, to be published this autumn by the St. John's College Press, Annapolis.

And permit me a final footnote: that article shows that it was Bernard Lewis to whom the discovery is due that *one* of Bach's ways with words, deliberate mis-stressing —occasional or climactic—is a way he has in common with the dancing and chanting of dervishes. But, of course, the patron saint of ecstatic dancing and linguistic levitation is King David.

BEATE RUHM VON OPPEN
St. John's College,
Annapolis, Maryland

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN writes:

I thank Beate Ruhm von Oppen for revealing what the exhaustive Telefunken commentary concealed: the English translator of the cantatas is indeed Henry S. Drinker. It is surprising that Telefunken should have chosen Drinker's translations, since, as Miss von Oppen points out, they were written to be sung. That goal itself is troubling, for the abstract sound of the original language is a musical component of the composition; the composer uses the phonemes and accents of his language as carefully as he does the elements of harmony and counterpoint. Singing in translation is often expedient but

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They want to dismember America's major oil companies. To break them into little pieces—some to explore and drill for oil—some to transport it—some to refine it—and perhaps still others to market the finished products. This, according to these politicians, will increase competition and lead to lower prices.

Even now, there are many independent middlemen in the oil industry—refiners, pipeline companies and marketers both small and large. But this does not mean that an industry limited to smaller, single-function companies can get the job done.

Acts of Congress calling for "divestiture" of production, transportation, refining and marketing functions by the major oil companies will create new layers of "middlemen" in our energy industry—each needing his own reasonable profit margin in order to stay in business. When all of these profit units are added together, they must result in higher prices to you, the ultimate consumer.

In the past five years, the top oil companies have earned less return on equity than companies in many other industries. That return, at least, is necessary to generate the multi-billion dollar investments to find and produce new domestic oil.

If the oil companies are forced to dismember their production, transportation, refining and marketing functions, what is left will not be able to generate the capital needed to find new domestic sources of energy. Our dependence on foreign oil can only worsen.

What this great country needs now is an effective energy policy that will make us more self-sufficient. Breaking up the oil companies and adding more middlemen is hardly an answer. If you agree, write your Senators and Representative.

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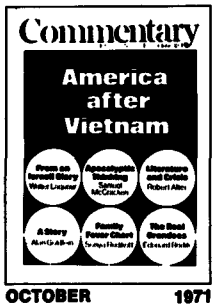

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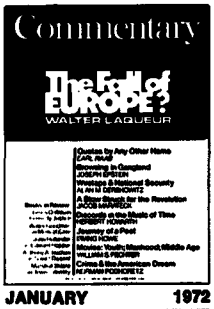

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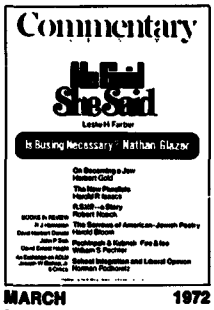

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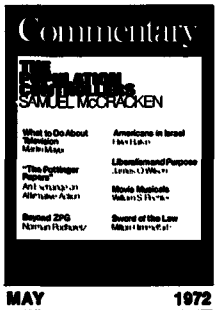

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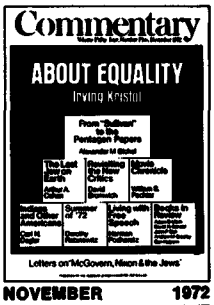

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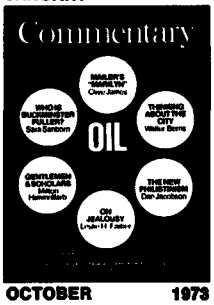

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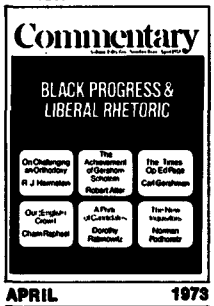

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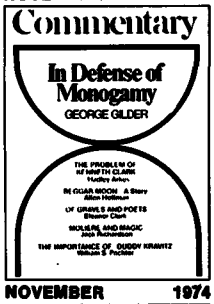

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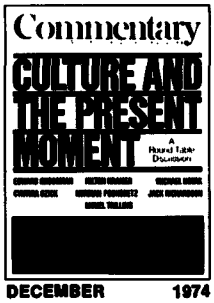

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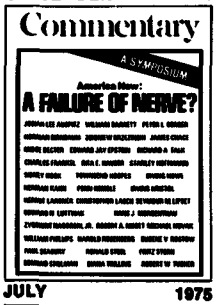

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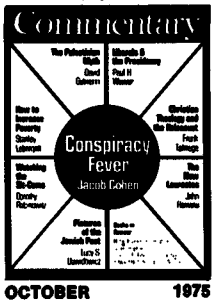

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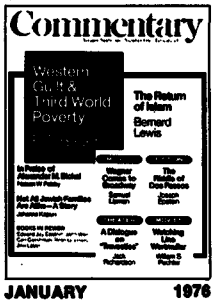

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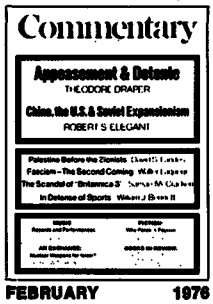

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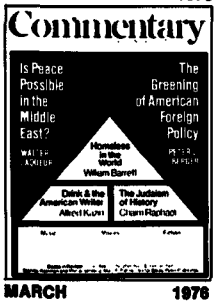

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it should be recognized as more than a mere textual change. Finally, a difficulty with Mr. Drinker's translations may be noticed in his own English prose: "The Bach Chorales are as unerring as the planets, as fresh as the sea-breeze in the morning, and as nourishing and wholesome as roast beef or bread and butter." Unfortunately, this conjunction of astronomy, meteorology, and gastronomy has as little to do with the spirit of Bach's Chorales as some of Mr. Drinker's translations have to do with the specific meanings of Bach's texts.

Energy Policy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I think that Eugene Bardach's article, "Save Energy, Save a Soul" [May], makes a lot of sense. If I correct him on a point, it's because I hate to see so good an article fall into confusion.

There is nothing "unfathomable" or "bizarre" about the net-energy-yield test. Where energy is both the output and one of the inputs, then the net-energy-yield test can be seen as a special case of a businessman's profitability test. If you have to invest ten BTU's to produce ten, then the investment will be a losing proposition. Exceptions to this rule are imaginable in principle, but extremely unlikely in practice.

Indeed, conservationists can be assured that for the rational businessman, the net-energy-yield test is the absolute minimum criterion. The reason is that his costs of production involve more than just the purchase of energy. For example, there are interest charges. Also, if some of the BTU's on the input side are to be regarded as the inputs of an engineer, then those BTU's will be priced much higher than the BTU's on the output side. In practice, then, the net-energy-yield will not only have to be positive, but a very large positive.

The point about the net-energy-yield test is not that it is wrong, but only that it adds nothing to our knowledge.

EUGENE EPSTEIN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Eugene Bardach's rejoinder to the advocates of energy conservation is an extraordinary compound of *ad hominem* attacks and airy dismissal of the real issues.

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Mr. Bardach begins with the rather disingenuous comment that "everyone who counts seems to agree that as a nation we must conserve energy." But notwithstanding the current political rhetoric, the people who really count—the policy-makers in Washington—seem rather to agree with Mr. Bardach. Or so one would judge from their deeds. Even though the Energy Research and Development Administration says in its current *National Plan for Energy Research, Development, and Demonstration* that energy conservation has "highest priority," a tight lid has been clamped on the ERDA conservation budget. For example, only $9 million will be spent next year on industrial energy conservation out of a total energy budget of $6 billion. Even more significantly, ERDA's Office of Commercialization—responsible for actually putting new energy technologies into use—has no plans for even looking at conservation technologies, even though many of them have already been developed. The Federal Energy Administration's record in the conservation area is, if anything, worse, causing FEA's most recent Assistant Administrator for Conservation and Environment to resign in protest.

The fundamental assumption which underlies Mr. Bardach's argument, and no doubt the view of government planners as well, is that the free market will enforce an optimum rate of energy use in the absence of government intervention. That this faith is contrary to all empirical evidence does not bother the devotees of the market. The refusal, for example, of the American steel industry to adopt the low-cost, energy-efficient basic oxygen furnace until many years after its widespread use in Europe is merely an inconvenient fact; what matters is the pure theory of the "invisible hand."

The present level of efficiency in American industry's energy use is exemplified by the FEA's inclusion of "Eliminate Unused Roof Openings" on a list of important energy-conservation measures for factories. The question of implementation—how to make industry take those steps that Mr. Bardach cheerfully admits are in everyone's interest and then forgets about completely—is perhaps the most important issue in the entire area of energy conservation.

Mr. Bardach's handling of the environmental question is, to say the least, unique. He assumes that the only environmental effects of coal and oil are connected with mines and wells. The contributions of energy use, which include nearly all the sulfur and nitrogen oxides in our atmosphere as well as a portion (how large no one knows) of the cancer-causing agents in the environment, are ignored entirely.

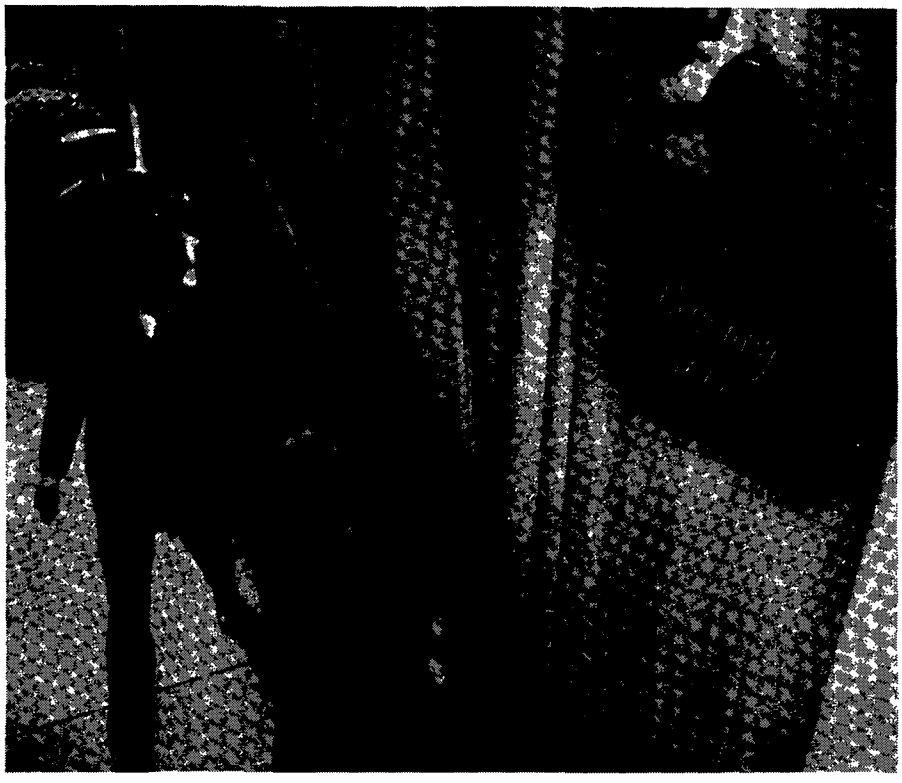
Those of us who believe that our economic system in no way resembles a perfect optimum in the allocation of resources, that current energy prices fail to reflect all environmental costs, and that private planners discount the future more than public planners should, cannot share Mr. Bardach's facile optimism about future energy supply. A proper conservation program will not eliminate the need to develop new sources of supply. But the health of our economy, not to speak of the health of our population, depends on a vigorous effort to keep future energy demands down to a manageable level.

BENJAMIN ROSS
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In spite of Eugene Bardach's arguments about how little energy can be saved and why it should not be conserved, there are some facts which cannot be easily explained or justified. Why does the United States, with about 6 per cent of the world's population, use about 40 per cent of the energy? Can this situation last forever and will the rest of the world support us in the style to which we are accustomed without "forceful intervention"? Why is there not a need for energy conservation when our oil production is declining and we depend on foreign (largely Arab) oil? If a 1961 Buick is still running, why not declare a moratorium on automobile production and save energy, materials, labor, and capital? . . .

According to Mr. Bardach, people who ride bicycles are devotees of some pagan cult devoted to Hercules or Beowulf. Those who advocate energy-saving measures such as mass transit are primitive Christians who believe in self-sacrifice and asceticism. With such statements from academics, no wonder



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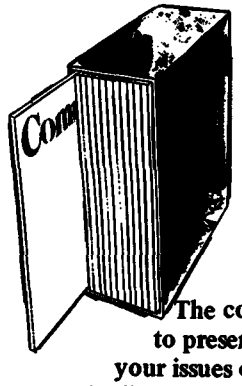

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the United States has no energy policy.

The automobile manufacturers, oil companies, and other business conglomerates are unpopular . . . not because of "demonology" but because big business does not act in the public interest. The "robber barons" are still with us but instead of the railroads we have the automobile-oil-cement-highway lobby. Manufacturers have fought tooth and nail against fair wages, safety measures, anti-pollution regulations, and energy conservation. General Motors was instrumental in killing mass transit and railroad passenger service. They do not want this competition to reappear. Most writers and commentators are not very enthusiastic about conservation. This is because the media depend on big business for advertising revenue. Universities have research contracts and other business connections. . . .

The fact is that intellectuals, including many economists and scientists, are deeply concerned about our economic system and what it is doing to the people and to the planet. America's faith is in "free enterprise" or free-market capitalism on the Adam Smith model. However, the free market is confined to the declining area of small business and family farms. The dominant force in our society is what might be called the military-industrial complex or private monopoly capitalism whose characteristics have been well described by John Kenneth Galbraith. Large amounts of capital and several years of planning go into a production line. Demand is created and sustained by advertising. The system is not flexible and does not respond readily to changing circumstances. . . . It uses ever increasing amounts of energy and materials and is vulnerable to shortages, which cause recessions and unemployment.

Obviously, what is needed is overall national planning and allocation of fuel, materials, equipment, and labor. The objection to this is that government planning or state socialism is often inefficient, incompetent, and repressive. State planning in the Soviet Union eliminates a lot of waste in non-essential consumer goods but is repressive, militaristic, and deficient in providing basic necessities, such as food. However, it should be possible to have a democratic and humane type of planned economy. It should also be possible for the government to be independent of special interests and to act in the public interest. The answer to our situation might be simply for us all to become better citizens.

Mr. Bardach's is not the only negative voice. There seem to be a malaise, apathy, and hopelessness today at a time when we have the technology to solve our problems. . . . The malaise might be caused by the failure of the Baal of free enterprise to deliver all its promises. . . .

There is a religion available which has inspired wise men down through the ages to criticize human society and set forth goals for humanity. It is based on moral laws and on justice, mercy, and benevolence. It is the religion of Moses, the Prophets, and the sages of Israel. Why not apply it to the problems of today and work together for a better society? Why not substitute the Law of Moses for the law of the jungle?

WINTHROP C. WOLFE
Washington, D. C.

EUGENE BARDACH writes:

If the energy budgeteers actually perform their accounting as Eugene Epstein imagines they do, he might be right. In that case, if the net-energy-yield test were successfully to displace the conventional economic test, as the BTU theorists urge, society would end up producing and consuming too much energy.

However, I believe he underestimates the ingenuity of the energy accountants. In an article to which I referred in my essay, Martha Gilliland in fact translates many non-energy costs of production into kilocalories. For instance, she estimates the 30-year construction and operation costs of labor, taxes, rents, and interest for a certain geothermal reservoir at $22 million. This is the equivalent, in her analysis, of 140 billion kilocalories. Although she does not indicate the source of her conversion factor of 6,400 kilocalories per dollar for such items, it is bound to be "bizarre." Interest, for example, reflects a social rate of time of preference; hence, she must be using a formula for translating time into energy, if not in fact then at least by implication. I am confident that it is not Einstein's theory at work here but simple confusion, though the confusion is neither Mr. Epstein's nor mine.

In reply to Benjamin Ross, I do

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not say that energy markets work perfectly, only that they are likely to have a much more powerful effect on present and future energy consumption patterns than any amount of conservationist rhetoric. Relatively low energy prices over a long period were partly responsible for our present consumption pattern. Relatively higher prices in Europe and Japan induced a quite different, and much more frugal, pattern. If energy prices continue to rise, I do indeed have faith that those sluggish factory managers will get around to eliminating all those unused roof openings. If we want them to be less sluggish, I would suggest offering information and technical assistance rather than the governmental compulsion Mr. Ross appears to favor.

Mr. Ross is correct in thinking energy markets highly imperfect. They could be improved considerably if the federal and state governments were to stop regulating them so badly. But the worst offender in the energy marketplace is, of course, OPEC. The high price and insecurity of OPEC oil induces all who can do so to exploit high-cost domestic sources instead of using Middle Eastern oil which costs a pittance to produce.

Mr. Ross refers to certain noxious effluents which are the "contributions of energy use." Indeed they are, but energy conservation would be an inefficient and probably ineffective way to deal with these discharges. Present anti-pollution policies, as imperfect as they are, at least aim at the right target, the discharges themselves.

Since fossil fuels are finite, we can all agree that eventually people will turn to more abundant energy resources, say, the sun or hydrogen. Presumably, Mr. Ross's idea of a "proper conservation program" to benefit future generations should be linked to managing this particular economic transition. For my part, I cannot conceive that any such linkage could be other than very weak. The social cost of such a transition will be so heavily dependent on the character of the new energy technologies that a slightly lower future price for fossil fuel BTU's—which is what the future gains by conservation efforts today—will be virtually irrelevant.

Winthrop C. Wolfe's letter simply confirms the central argument of my original essay: "energy conservation" is symbolic politics, not practical policy. Amid such rhetoric it is a little difficult to remember that we must attend to such mundane problems as are involved in producing and consuming barrels of oil and tons of coal. I shall not restate here the cultural and psychological interpretations I applied in my essay to the symbol of "energy." Suffice it to say that Mr. Wolfe's letter is further validation of my inferences.

One particular error in Mr. Wolfe's argument, however, is sufficiently widespread to warrant rebutting. Nothing of interest can be adduced from the fact that the United States has 6 per cent of the world's population but uses 40 per cent of the energy produced. We consume disproportionately more of many things—that is what it means to be affluent. If Mr. Wolfe and others desire a program to equalize wealth across nations, they should not limit its scope to barrels of oil and tons of coal.

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"Eurocommunism" and Its Friends

Walter Laqueur

THE PROBLEM of cooperation between democratic and Communist parties is not new. Originally, in the 1920's, it was a major doctrinal issue for the Communists, but lately it has ceased bothering them and has now mainly become a problem for their prospective democratic partners. Sir Harold Wilson—until recently Prime Minister of the British Labour government, and a man who has never been accused of being either an alarmist or a cold warrior—warned not long ago against collaboration between democratic socialists and Communists, which he said was bound to endanger democracy, and not only in the country in which the alliance is consummated. In the United States, by contrast, many voices have been advocating an accommodation with West European Communism, or "Eurocommunism," as it is coming to be called. Some have argued that Italian Communism in particular is essentially moderate and reformist and will become even more so, provided of course that an intransigent American foreign policy does not reject the outstretched hand and thus strengthen the influence of the pro-Soviet elements in the PCI. Others, such as George Ball, have maintained that the rise to power of Italian Communism is inevitable, and that if Washington only plays its cards right, the United States may actually benefit if and when a new situation is created in Rome.

These American advocates of an accommodation with the PCI are not generally known for their attachment to the values of democratic socialism—a fact which has sorely tried the patience of some Italians. One prominent Italian journalist was tempted, he said, to remind American readers that the rise of Fascism under Benito Mussolini was also welcomed at the beginning by a large number of Americans, including intellectuals and journalists.* This in turn provoked a pained outcry: to draw even an implicit analogy of this kind was scandalous. Obviously no one wants to be compared with the early defenders of Fascism. But is the analogy really so self-evidently wrong, or does it perhaps help to throw a bit of light on present-day attitudes to the emergence of a new, strange, and in some ways attractive political movement which has the one drawback of being non-democratic in character?

In this connection it is essential to recall that Fascism in 1922, and for quite a few years thereafter, did not yet have the purely negative connotations it later acquired and still has now. The old system, as the London *Times* wrote on October 31, 1922 (the day Mussolini was made Prime Minister), had been "very corrupt," and the New York *Times* commented on the very next day that the new rulers were after all of a "relatively harmless type." Winston Churchill was more positive. "If I had been an Italian," Churchill told a group of Fascists, "I would have been wholeheartedly with you from the beginning." He had been charmed, he said, by Signor Mussolini's gentle and simple bearing and by his calm and detached demeanor—clearly, Mussolini was a man who thought of nothing but the lasting good of the Italian people. Other observers saw Fascism as a genuine movement of national regeneration, an attempt to restore order and cohesion to a country torn by bitter internal strife. Mussolini was making the trains run on time, suppressing the Mafia, and cleaning up the cities (as Lord Howard, a visiting Englishman wrote: "Under Fascism Italians no longer spit in public").

Sympathy for Fascist Italy was by no means limited in the early days to the Right and to big business. Not a few well-wishers could be found among the liberals and on the Left. George Bernard Shaw was a fervent supporter for many years. H. G. Wells said that there was something in Fascism "of a more enduring type than most of the other supersessions of parliamentary methods"—it insisted on discipline and service. The editor of the *Observer*, leader of liberal opinion in Britain, wrote that Mussolini was a "volcano of a man." And in a little book on *The Historic Causes of the Present State of Affairs in Italy* (Oxford, 1923), G.M. Trevelyan, the author of a monumental biography of Garibaldi, declared:

> Let us not be impatient with Italy if she is for a moment swerving from the path of liberty in

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* Marino de Medici, in an exchange with Peter Lange, *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1976.

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the course of a very earnest attempt to set her house in order and to cope with the evils which the friends of liberty have allowed to grow up. Signor Mussolini is a great man and according to his lights a very sincere patriot. Let our prayer for him be not that he victoriously destroy free institutions in Italy, but that he may be remembered as a man who gave his country order and discipline when she most needed them, and so enabled those free institutions to be restored in an era happier than that in which it is our present destiny to live.

Reaction in America too was frequently enthusiastic. Lincoln Steffens was an admirer of Mussolini. Charles Beard thought Mussolini was a populist and that he represented "destiny riding without any saddle and bridle across the historical peninsula." Horace Kallen counseled understanding in the *New Republic,* which, in an editorial, admonished its readers that harsh judgments of the present regime in Italy would be a great mistake. The view that Fascist Italy was an interesting social experiment was shared by Stark Young, Herbert Croly, and other Progressives of the day, and Jo Davidson produced an impressive bust of Mussolini. And when Smedley Butler, a U.S. army general, made a speech critical of Fascist Italy, he was court-martialed and bitterly attacked by both the New York *Times* and *Time* magazine.*

All this makes embarrassing reading today, but it is also true that one can think of a great many mitigating circumstances. The former government *had* been corrupt, and Fascism indeed restored order; the well-wishers simply failed to realize that while corruption was bad, it was not the only evil threatening Italy, and perhaps not even the worst. Fascism was not a "bad good thing," as H.G. Wells wrote in 1933; it was a bad thing *tout court.* But again, measured against the abominations of Fascism elsewhere, Italian Fascism was a mild form of dictatorship—"Fascism with a human face," as one might say. Not many political opponents were killed. Cultural censorship was relatively relaxed and the great majority of Italian intellectuals, including many who after 1943 became fervent anti-Fascists, at first collaborated with the regime. Those who predicted early on that Fascism would inescapably lead to war were proved right, but only because Fascist regimes emerged elsewhere in Europe as well. Had this not been the case, it is doubtful whether the Duce would have dared to invade Ethiopia, and of course there would have been no World War II. Perhaps the regime would have mellowed in time, perhaps it would have developed after several decades into a freer society. But the Fascist wave did spread and we have to face the fatal consequences to this day.

THE POLITICAL landscape has changed since 1922, but the inclination toward wishful thinking remains. There still is the same tendency among outside observers to give non-democratic parties the benefit of all possible doubts. After the last Congress of the French Communist party, for example, the Washington *Post* said that the new slogans "sound positively Jeffersonian." And the paper added: "It is poor taste to jeer at other people's sudden conversion." This, of course, is very true indeed, but whether the same rule applies to the first exhibition of a "new look" at a fashion show is less certain. It is more important to consider whether and to what extent the new democratic professions of some of the West European Communist parties can be taken at face value, and, above all, to ponder the likely course of action of these parties once they become part of a government coalition.

That there are are ideological differences between the European Communists and the Russians is by now well known. The Russians regard the dictatorship of the proletariat as the "supreme form of democracy," while the Italians and the French, much to the chargrin of Moscow, have dropped the concept. The Russians stress proletarian internationalism—meaning obedience to Moscow—whereas the French at their recent party Congress proclaimed *socialisme aux couleurs de la France,* the Italians propagate "critical solidarity," and the Spanish have declared that the old-style internationalism is dead altogether and that they alone will be responsible for the "Spanish march to socialism." The final document issued at the conference of European Communist leaders in June made no mention of proletarian internationalism. According to Santiago Carillo, the head of the Spanish Communist party, given Europe's different (meaning more democratic) historical tradition, socialism in Western Europe is bound to differ from socialism in the USSR; this, he said, "is not a question of tactics and propaganda."

The economic and social programs of the Western Communist parties are anything but revolutionary. The Italians do not insist on immediate large-scale nationalization, which is perhaps not very surprising when one considers that about half of Italy's major industries now belong to the state anyway. The program of the French Socialists is in some respects more radical than that of the French Communists, and the same goes for the Spanish Socialists. Above all, Western Communists have strongly emphasized their devotion to democratic values: according to French Communist leader Georges Marchais, there can be no democracy and no liberty without political pluralism or without freedom of speech.

So far as foreign affairs are concerned, the Italian and Spanish Communists do not oppose the Common Market, and they have even modified their attitude toward NATO. Only a few

* The examples given above are mainly drawn from R. Bosworth, "The British Press, the Conservatives, and Mussolini: 1920-1934," *Journal of Contemporary History,* 2, 1970, and from John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism,* Princeton, 1972. Similar examples from Germany, France, and other parts of the world could easily be listed.

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years ago they took the position that NATO had to be fought so as to liberate Europe from U.S. hegemony. Most recently they have stated that the dissolution of power blocs can only come about through détente, and meanwhile there should be no reversal of alliances. To quote Carillo again: "One day the Americans will leave Spain, but this should be envisaged only when the Russians withdraw from Czechoslovakia."

All these developments are very interesting. They would be even more reassuring if they were not repeat performances. The French Communists were very discreet about the dictatorship of the proletariat when they entered the Popular Front in the 1930's, and again in 1945. At that time their leader, Maurice Thorez, gave an interview to the London *Times* in which he announced that France would not follow the Russian road to socialism, but that the French people, "rich in glorious tradition," would find its own way. The glorious tradition did not prevent the French party from reembracing Stalinism soon after.

There is no denying that the West European Communist parties have learned from past mistakes and that they have become more modern and more pragmatic in their approach. But they have not become more democratic, and it is difficult to imagine that parties which are still strictly authoritarian in their own internal structure could become guardians of liberty in the sphere of national politics. When Carillo was asked recently what in view of the doctrinal changes were the remaining differences between the Communists and the social democrats, he answered quite truthfully that in the final analysis his party was Leninist. This, of course, is the crux of the matter. There is so far no known case of a Leninist party becoming democratic in its own operations. "Democratic centralism"—that is, the suppression of all dissent—remains the guiding principle of all Communist parties, including the Italian party under Enrico Berlinguer and the French party under Marchais.

Nor is the meaning of some of the doctrinal innovations at all clear. The Russians, to do them justice, have never insisted that other Communist parties should "slavishly imitate" the Russian pattern. They have always conceded, at least in theory, that there are "national peculiarities" which should be taken into account. But they have even more forcefully stressed that all Communist parties are obliged to learn from the Soviet experience gained in the progress toward socialism. The question whether the "national peculiarities" or the "Soviet lessons" are more important has thus been left open.

Having dropped the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the French have replaced it with a new notion—that of the "hegemony of the working class"—and it may take a great deal of semantic effort to sort out the distinctions. The Italians have vowed their attachment to pluralism; what they mean by this may perhaps be inferred from the praise Gian Carlo Pajetta, one of their more enlightened leaders, has accorded the multiparty systems of East Germany and Poland. (Only specialists will recall that in these countries, as in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, there exist to this day three or four "non-Communist" parties; their political influence is, roughly speaking, comparable to that of the Foreign Ministry of the White Russian Soviet Republic.) And even Santiago Carillo has declared that while his party should remain in the *Junta Democratica*, everyone will go his own way once the immediate objectives are reached, and that the friends of today will be the enemies of tomorrow. The Italian Communists have expressed warm support for European cooperation, very much in contrast to the French who only last month bitterly attacked the Polish Prime Minister for having praised the European Economic Community. But even the Italians have said that they would like to transform the "small" into a "big" Europe, taking a neutral position between East and West.

GIVEN THESE and many other ambiguities, the question invariably arises whether the significance of recent ideological changes has not been overrated by Western observers, forever in search of the proverbial silver lining. It is impossible to give a clear answer, partly because Communist explanations have been contradictory, partly because conditions vary from country to country. The French party is the most orthodox and its foreign policy is still, by and large, dictated by Moscow, except on rare occasions when it is angered by what it considers excessive Soviet professions of friendship toward the French government. The Italians are more independent; they find little to admire in the Soviet system and comments made in private by some of their leaders have been very outspoken indeed. The Spanish are even more extreme in this respect; Carillo once said that if Russia were to attack Spain as it invaded Czechoslovakia, he would not hesitate for a moment to give the order to resist.

As for Italy, it is perfectly true that the PCI no more wants Soviet bases on Italian soil than a repetition of the recent earthquake, and there would be no dancing in the streets of Rome and Milan if Moscow regained a foothold in Yugoslavia and Albania. But when Berlinguer talks about the "iron link" uniting the Communist party of Italy with the Soviet Union, and when he proclaims that those who expect a "break between us and the Soviet Union will forever be disappointed," he is merely expressing the exigencies of his own political situation. Internally, the legitimacy of the Communist party, despite all its reservations, still rests on the Soviet connection; a break would split the party, partly because the rank and file is more fundamentalist in its political convictions than the leadership. This explains the apparent paradox

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that the erstwhile "right-wing" critics of the Soviet Union such as Amendola and Pajetta are now much more restrained in their approach as compared with Ingrao, the head of the left-wing faction, who is more outspoken about the senior partner in the Communist camp.

The relation of forces in France is, of course, altogether different. There is on the one hand the prospect of an electoral victory with the Socialists in 1978 on the basis of the *program commun*. But the French Communists are now the junior partner in the alliance; unlike the Italians they have been unable to break out of the working-class ghetto. Their share of the electorate has gone down from 28 per cent in 1946 to 20 per cent or perhaps even less, whereas the Socialist party has made an astonishing recovery in recent years. But the Socialists have far less cohesion and discipline than the Communists, the attachment of their radical wing (CERES) to parliamentary democracy is not above suspicion, and there is always the chance of a split, with a minority of Socialists joining forces with the Communists. Jean-François Revel, author of *La Tentation Totalitaire*, recently wrote that the Socialists under Mitterrand have gained arithmetically, but ideologically it is the Socialists who have been Stalinized. This may be too harsh, and in any case whereas the non-Communist structures in Italy are in a state of decomposition, in France the democratic tradition is considerably stronger and not limited to political parties. Nor has the French Communist leadership shown a political acumen equal to that of their Italian comrades.

Predictions concerning the fortunes of Spanish Communism are most difficult of all because everything now depends on the outcome of the struggle for power in that country, a struggle reflected in but not likely to be resolved by the recent appointment of a new Prime Minister. The moderation shown by the Spanish Communist leadership has been noted, but as in Italy the moderates are challenged by more radical elements among the rank and file, particularly in Catalonia and the Basque region. Spanish politics has witnessed in recent months both growing polarization between right-wing and leftist forces and also an almost incredible fragmentation of parties, groups, and *groupuscules*. The popular basis of Spanish Communism is as yet relatively narrow, but the Communists dominate the trade unions and they have made considerable inroads among the intellectuals (and the media).

ADVICE HAS freely been offered as to how the United States should deal with the new offensive of West European Communism. Some of it is based on predictions that need hardly be taken very seriously—for instance, the idea that the advance of the Western Communists is bound to strengthen the liberal trend in world Communism and inside the Soviet Union itself. It is just possible (but quite unlikely) that the deviations of Western Communism could have a certain impact on some East European countries, and that as a result the Soviet leaders would again be preoccupied with restoring order in their own back yard. But far from encouraging a liberalization within the Soviet sphere, such a development would lead to a tightening up. As to whether it would limit Soviet forward operations in other parts of the globe, that is another question.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, in an interview with the Italian weekly *L'Espresso*, has said that a new American government will interpret the changes that have taken place in Europe in recent years as positive signs and not as symptoms of decadence and crisis. Zygmunt Nagorski, Jr. of the Council on Foreign Relations, writing in the New York *Times*, has claimed that a new Europe is emerging and that America is failing to adjust itself. Europe's democratic institutions, he says, "require new concepts and new flexibility. They also need to be overhauled in view of the rising demands of highly developed, highly structured, highly stratified societies. . . . The new power levers are about to move that country [Italy] either away from us or closer to the Atlantic Alliance. . . . It is time to look toward the new European political and social requirements leading toward a different world."

It is not at all clear what positive changes Mr. Brzezinski has in mind, nor what Mr. Nagorski's "European political and social requirements" are, let alone what highly structured and highly stratified societies have to do with the present problems; the Delphic Oracle was a paragon of precision and clarity in comparison with pronouncements of this kind. But they are wrong in any case. The American proclivity to generalize about Europe as if it were, like the United States, one country, one nation, one society, always leads to confusion. The problems facing Spain have nothing in common with those confronting Scandinavia. If the trend in Italy has been to the Left, in Britain, West Germany, and Sweden it is at present to the Right, or perhaps more correctly, to the center. It is regrettable, no doubt, that generalizations about Europe are invariably wrong; this is, in fact, part of the European problem. But it is quite meaningless to call for an American adjustment to the "new European political and social requirements," when the various parts of Europe are moving in different directions.

The same lack of specificity applies to the complaint that America has not shown sufficient sympathy for the forces of democratic socialism in Europe. Broadly speaking this is not true, except perhaps for the fact that Margaret Thatcher was invited to the White House and Mitterrand was not. But on the other hand, U.S. relations with the social democrats in Bonn and London have always been closer than with right-of-center governments in Paris. The problem facing the United States in Europe is not in any case to refrain from showing favoritism in the confrontation between the Left and the Right; it is the non-

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democratic character of the Communist parties and their Russian connection.

More specifically, it has been claimed that American intransigence toward the Italian Communists is bound to drive them back into Moscow's arms. This may or may not be true: all that can be said is that past experience, paradoxically, seems to point the other way. American attitudes toward Communist China in the 1950's were excessively hostile, but this did not prevent the Sino-Soviet split. Up to 1948 Yugoslavia was considered the most contrary Soviet satellite (with the possible exception of Albania) by the Western powers, yet the Yugoslav and Albanian leaders quarreled with the Kremlin anyway. Conversely, American sympathy for Castro in his early days did not prevent Cuba from embracing the Soviet Union.

Another claim is that the hard line taken by the United States on Italian Communism will offend and alienate sectors of Italian public opinion which have traditionally been pro-American. Such warnings, however, have more often emanated from New York and Washington than from Rome and Milan. Close observers of the Italian domestic scene like Enzo Bettiza, editor of *Il Giornale Nuovo*, have declared that, on the contrary, Italians have been convinced by American newspapers such as the Washington *Post* and the New York *Times* "that public opinion in the U.S. about the credibility of the Italian Communist party has fundamentally changed." And when someone like George Ball tells the Italians, as he did in an interview with the weekly *Il Mondo*, "We cannot change a process that is now irreversible," it is easy to imagine the effect at a time when the demand for postdated Communist-party membership cards has been on the increase anyway. Who wants to resist an inevitable and irresistible historical process?

It has been said, quite rightly, that Italy is first and foremost a European problem and that it would be far easier to solve it if Europe were united. But Europe is not united and one cannot reasonably expect a decisive initiative from these quarters. On the contrary, Chancellor Schmidt's critical comments on the Italian situation have caused a mini-crisis. The Italian Christian Democrats have resented the aspersions cast on them, and it is of course true that the German Chancellor should have castigated above all the Italian Socialists, for it is their inability to provide a viable alternative to Christian Democratic rule which is at the bottom of the present situation.

THE issue most frequently discussed is the future of Italy in NATO—and the future of NATO in general. It has been said that Iceland remained in NATO even under a Communist coalition, and that there is no reason why Italy should not also remain so long as Communists are not in key positions that have a bearing on national security. But Italy is not Iceland, and in the modern world there are few ministerial offices that do not have a bearing of one kind or another on national security.

The future of NATO depends on how its functions are interpreted, whether one regards it as a club or a trading company with limited liability—in which case there are indeed no insurmountable difficulties ahead. But if it is considered, as in the past, a defensive alliance based on the assumption that an attack against one is an attack against all, and if it is recalled that Italy, *inter alia*, is a member of the Nuclear Planning Group, the complications immediately become apparent. It can be taken for granted that even under a coalition including the Communists, Italy would still be interested in remaining under the NATO umbrella; if something untoward should happen to Yugoslavia, this desire might become even stronger. But what active part would Italy play in the alliance, and to what extent would its representatives be trusted by the other members of NATO?

Italy, moreover, happens to be located on the critical southern flank of NATO. An Italian government with Communist participation might well (as it has been argued) pursue Italian interests more forcefully, but this is about the last thing that is needed at a time when there is little, if any, momentum left in the movement toward European political cooperation. The Communists would at best perpetuate this stagnation; more likely, they would undermine the fragile balance of power which at present constitutes the sole guarantee of Europe's relative immunity from Soviet pressure.

Some commentators have argued all along that NATO may no longer be needed since détente is so deeply rooted, since military power does not really count in the modern world, and since the Soviet Union is so preoccupied with its East European allies. Those who maintained only a short while ago that the danger of Finlandization in Europe was a figment of the imagination now claim that Finland, everything considered, is not doing so badly after all. Others, less remote from the realities of the European scene, have been proposing the establishment of an inner and outer circle in NATO with, say, Western Germany and Britain as the core, and other countries more loosely associated. But aside from the technical difficulties involved in such a transformation, it would certainly weaken the alliance, and it would also again increase the pressure in the U.S. for withdrawal of American troops from Europe. For even if a new West European Communist power center should emerge as a counterweight against Soviet pressure —a most unlikely proposition in the foreseeable future—it would not be easy to persuade the citizens of Iowa or Colorado that one kind of Communist bloc should be defended against another.

Lastly there is the argument that Italy is different, that Americans are too crude and ignorant to understand the intricacies of Italian politics, that

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they are unaccustomed to coalition governments and therefore fail to see the difference between a *Putsch* and the sharing of power. Once the Italian Communists enter the government, it is said, they too will be sucked into the quagmire of Italian intrigues like so many well-meaning politicians before them. We are advised, in short, to rely not so much on the moderation and liberal character of Italian Communism as on the changes that will set in once the party is no longer in opposition but part of the "system." Given the facts of Italian life —the civilized level of political intercourse on the one hand, and the corrosive impact of intrigues and corruption (in the widest sense) on the other —such a possibility can by no means be ruled out. But the chances of a development on similar lines in France or Spain, or indeed in any other European country, are minimal.

MEANWHILE, the prospects are that Italy will stagger on from crisis to crisis. The Communists have improved their position but the dramatic breakthrough has not occurred. The Christian Democrats are still the strongest party; public order is still breaking down; the country is still saddled with an inflated and inefficient government apparatus, enormously increased labor costs, a capitalist class which regards tax evasion as a national sport, and a big nationalized sector in the economy which is so wasteful that even the Communists want partly to dismantle it. The Communists may not be too unhappy that they have not yet been called to share full responsibility for this sorry state of affairs; they did not want elections in 1976 in the first place and they know that, in any case, the country cannot be run without some tacit understanding between them and the Christian Democrats. Thus they will have some real power without too much responsibility for the results. And of course well-meaning Western observers will, as the Socialist Saragat (a former President of the Republic) puts it, continue to regard Italian Communism as a quaint and not too dangerous piece of Mediterranean folklore, or—in the words of Claire Sterling —a unique party which, unlike all other political parties, really means everything it says and which promises a most exciting social and political experiment.

The question remains to be asked whether it is too late even now for the emergence of a democratic alternative to the Communists and the Christian Democrats. Certainly recent Italian experience has not been encouraging, and the usual intrigues of professional politicians apart, this has been to a significant extent the fault of the intellectuals and, in particular, the media. After 1945, with the memory of their deplorable record under Fascism still fresh, there was a great deal of breast-beating among the intellectuals and of solemn promises to serve the ideals of political freedom with loyalty and fervor. Yet barely three decades later, when a Communist victory seemed virtually assured, a strange silence descended over the Italian scene, and in many circles there was an almost indecent haste not to be overtaken by the wave of the future. Some of these bearers of the conscience of the nation may have been afraid of losing their jobs, others were perhaps responding to social pressures, fearful of no longer being considered *uomini di cultura* (to quote Renzo de Felice, the leading historian of Fascism). But whatever the motives may have been, the old conformism reappeared with a vengeance. Indeed, some foreign observers even reached the conclusion that the *Gleichschaltung,* something akin to self-Finlandization, had already taken place, and that it was a foretaste of how much political and cultural freedom would ultimately survive under a government with Communist participation.

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The Poverty of Socialist Thought

Stephen Miller

POLITICAL LABELS are, like most things, subject to the law of civilization and decay. Such notions as liberal and conservative once enjoyed reasonably precise meanings, but by now they have become huge supermarkets under whose roofs a hodgepodge of miscellaneous notions is sold. As such they are no longer analytically useful, though they still remain rallying cries for many. One could, of course, attempt an inventory of all the items available in each store, but perhaps it would be more sensible to steer clear of such places—acknowledging their mysterious power to attract but, finally, dismissing them as Pope dismissed women and fools by saying that "true no-meaning puzzles more than wit."

But what of the labels socialist and socialism? I raise the question because socialism has been stirring up a certain amount of interest among intellectuals during the past five years. The fires of socialism, though reduced to a flicker in this country, are still burning. Yale University Press has recently reissued a collection of essays on socialism, edited by Irving Howe; and Michael Harrington, America's leading socialist, has in the last four years published two lengthy works on the subject. The last five years have also seen—to name a prominent few—works by George Lichtheim (*A Short History of Socialism*) and by Leszek Kolakowski and Stuart Hampshire (*The Socialist Idea: A Reappraisal*), the latter a collection of essays by several hands. Finally there is *Dissent*, the quarterly magazine of opinion, edited by Irving Howe and Michael Walzer—a magazine whose masthead says that it is "a journal devoted to radical ideas and the values of socialism and democracy."

By no means do all the authors of these works take the same line on socialism. Kolakowski is the most skeptical about the possibilities of a humane, democratic socialism, but even Harrington, who says that socialism "is simply our only hope," avoids the theatrics of revolution and liberation that were pervasive in the rhetoric of the New Left. The writers I have mentioned are, in the main, cautious and tentative about both the possibilities of socialism and the shape that future socialist regimes may take—their predictions hedged with numerous qualifications. Moreover, none of these writers sees much point in lambasting the so-called bourgeois capitalist world as evil to the core. Yet Howe and Harrington, the two writers whom I propose to examine closely, most definitely believe in the possibility—indeed in the necessity—of a democratic socialism.* What, we may wonder, is sold in this store?

The first problem is the brand-name itself: democratic socialism. Is it an oxymoron, a conjoining of contradictory and incongruous terms? Many people think so. When Andrei Sakharov, in an introduction to the new Soviet emigré journal, *Kontinent*, says that its contributors are persons "who have spent a significant part of their lives in socialist countries," he is alluding to Russia and the regimes of Eastern Europe—regimes no one in his right mind would call representative democracies. Yet Howe, who is second to none in his scorn for such regimes, speaks of socialism in positive terms, believing that the values of socialism and democracy are not necessarily at odds with each other. "To remain a socialist," he has said, "is to be convinced that the values and procedures of democracy must be spread through areas of our social life to which they have barely penetrated. . . ." The implication is that only socialism can create a climate in which democracy can truly flourish.

When Howe uses the term socialism, he is of course speaking about what *might* take place, whereas Sakharov is speaking of what has taken place. One wonders why Howe persists in using a term that has been so tarnished by historical realities, yet to give him (and also Harrington) his due, he is at pains to distinguish his vision of an "authentic" socialism from the so-called socialism of Russia and Eastern Europe. Moreover, both Howe and Harrington admit that the burden of

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* The names I have mentioned hardly exhaust the list of those laying claim to the label of democratic socialist in this country—there is, to take the most important example, Social Democrats U.S.A., an organization from which Harrington and Howe split several years ago over various issues which came to a head in the 1972 presidential elections.

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proof lies upon themselves, since historical realities should weigh more heavily than the blueprints of intellectuals. Given the fact that the socialist dream has been, for most people, a nightmare, if Howe and Harrington are to convince us of the rightness of the socialist "way," they must be very clear about the socialist values they remain committed to. And, even more important, they must carefully assess the chances of these values being attained in the liberal democracies of the West without the loss of the freedoms—admittedly imperfect but nevertheless quite real—that the citizens of these countries possess.

HOWE ESPECIALLY is aware that the socialist mansion contains rooms that one would prefer not to enter. He is forever backing into socialism—more often than not saying what socialism is not rather than what it is. Steeped in the horrors of the century, Howe does not assume that the traditional goal of socialism —public ownership of the means of production— is one that, if achieved, would automatically create the conditions for a humane, democratic society. Nevertheless he is reluctant to let go of such a notion, for if he does so he might be accused of being a "bourgeois-democratic" reformer, not a socialist. "The problem," he says in his introduction to the collection of essays, *Essential Works of Socialism*,* is "how to reconcile the traditional socialist emphasis upon property forms, an emphasis necessary but not sufficient, with a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between social structure and humane values." This reconciliation is a problem indeed, one that many find intractable, but Howe leaves it at that, giving no clues as to how we should go about arriving at such a "sophisticated understanding."

Though, according to Howe, an emphasis upon property is "necessary but not sufficient," it is not clear from his essays what form this emphasis should take. In one place he speaks of the need for a "collectivist economy" whereas in another he argues that a social-democratic society is one "in which a certain proportion of the central means of production would be socialized. . . ." If the latter proposal signifies the extent of Howe's commitment to socialism, then even F. A. Hayek, who considers himself an "unrepentant Old Whig," is —at least on this point—a socialist, for Hayek has argued that in a late-capitalist economy some industries that provide basic services should be socialized.

But it would not be fruitful to approach Howe's socialism as if he were a political economist elaborating upon the details of a socialist "takeover," for Howe is not especially interested in discussing the particular economic structures and mechanisms that would form the basis of a socialist society. As he says in a memoir of the 30's, he is ill at ease in the realm of economics. In fact, he seems distinctly uncomfortable with Marxian analysis, preferring to look at socialism as a "mode of freedom" rather than as the "correct" economic structure of a society. Speaking of the non-Marxian English socialists—Shaw, Wilde, and William Morris—he says that "their writing retains the freshness and value of imaginative projections of socialism as a mode of freedom. In their work, the vision of socialism remains alive and attractive . . . and perhaps more significant for socialist reconstruction than the militaristic utopianism of the Bolsheviks or the drab utilitarianism of the Social Democrats."

Howe, it appears, wants socialism with a soul, but it is hard to see how Wilde, Morris, and Shaw are useful as guides to a more humane society. Wilde's *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* is, as Philip Rieff has noted, the ur-countercultural tract, full of blather about everyone doing his own thing, whereas Morris's medievalist program has little to offer as a way out of the complex, highly-organized industrial societies of the West. And Shaw, finally, is better as an unmasker of capitalist humbug than as a hard thinker about the socialist future. In any case Shaw was not especially interested in a *democratic* socialism; his predilections made him rather an occasional apologist for Lenin and Mussolini.

With its emphasis upon "vision" and "imaginative projections," Howe's socialism might be called a literary socialism. As such it avoids the arid quibbling over doctrine that is often a feature of Marxian socialism. Yet, perhaps because Howe's socialism is not grounded in any particular theory, it often teeters on the edge of banality. For example, in an essay written in the mid-60's, Howe insists upon "a vision of society that has men acting for motives finer than accumulation, values better than manipulation, an ethic beyond the appetites of self." We may assent to such a "vision," but it is far from clear how any socio-political change would result in such a moral revolution. And this sermon, which seems as if it came out of late Tolstoy, ignores the fact that some of the worst crimes in history were committed for unselfish reasons—crimes based upon motives that certainly were not accumulative ones.

In recent essays Howe has, I think, moved away from such heady rhetoric, yet he still has the itch to conceive of socialism predominantly in moral terms. In a recent review in the *New Republic* he says: "Being a socialist comes, I think, to more than having the correct fundamental premises and analyses. . . . Something else is wanted: a passion, a sympathy, a capacity to respond warmly to the insurgency of oppressed groups even if their tactics are judged to be faulty and self-defeating." Passion and sympathy are of course attractive personal qualities, but they have a rather insidious ef-

* Yale University Press, 864 pp., $8.95 (paper).

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fect when made to serve as part of one's political "argument." How is one to answer such remarks? Who is to say who has more passion, sympathy, etc.? No matter how well intentioned, rhetoric like this introduces an element of self-righteousness into the discussion—the implication being that those who disagree with the substance of what the writer is saying are cruel and hard of heart.

And Howe's moral appeal, I should add, skirts around some rather difficult political problems. How do we distinguish among the claims of different oppressed groups, especially when every week sees a new "oppressed" group being born? How do we distinguish, say, between the "oppressed" members of Fatah and the "oppressed" migrant workers in the United States? These claims are especially difficult to deal with when they are made by different groups in the same society—by, say, the "oppressed" Boston Irish, who resent having their children bused, and the "oppressed" Boston blacks, who resent having their children sent to second-rate schools. Finally, oppressed groups, it needs to be said, notoriously have had little sympathy for claims other than their own, and rarely have had much interest in the freedom of others.

If Howe's literary approach to socialism lacks substance, it is in part because Howe—like any imaginative writer—has a hard time making the good believable as well as appealing. His writing is stronger when he deals with the betrayals of socialism than when he—wistfully, it seems—gives us visions of the future. In a recent essay, which serves as an introduction to his book, *The Critical Point*, Howe seems pessimistic about the possibility of a socialist society that would preserve freedom. In fact he stresses the importance of freedom much more than he stresses the importance of socialism. "The obligation to defend and extend freedom," Howe says, "is the sacred task of the intellectual, the one task he must not compromise even when his posture seems intractable, or unreasonable, or hopeless, or even when it means standing alone against fashionable shibboleths like Revolution and the Third World." Though the remainder of the essay focuses on the prospects for a democratic socialism, the heart of the essay is Howe's anxiety about the fate of liberty in the modern world.

The sentence I have quoted could, I think, serve as an epigraph to Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty*. Is Howe, then, an "Old Whig" dressed up as a socialist? The question is misguided. We should take him at his word: if he prefers to call himself a socialist, so be it; there is no reason to assume that all roads in the socialist tradition lead back to Marx—lead back, that is, to a special concern with economic structures. The road Howe takes leads instead to a European socialist who was an enemy of Marx's—Alexander Herzen. Herzen's socialism was, like Howe's, essentially a libertarian one. Like Howe, Herzen stressed the importance of pluralistic social institutions as the best means for attaining and preserving basic freedoms. And like Howe, Herzen was a populist, though Howe's "populist" interest in the American labor movement is much less romantic than Herzen's championing of the Russian peasant. Despite differences in style—Herzen was a much more flamboyant, emotionally-charged writer—the substance of their socialist visions is remarkably similar, so much so that a recent biographer's concluding remarks about Herzen can serve as a gloss on Howe: "Herzen's theory of socialism . . . was amorphous and ambiguous; it was less a political program than a vision designed to serve as an exhortation and a goad in order to stir enlightened society into some sort of action. . . ."

By taking such an approach to socialism, Herzen and Howe open themselves to the charge of being theoretically muddled and emotionally soft-headed. At their worst they are bemused wishful thinkers, but at their best they are humane and cautious radicals, committed to equality but at the same time skeptical of radical intellectuals and their penchant for intoxicating world-views. Howe, like Herzen, knows that when abstractions are bandied about individuals tend to get short shrift—served up as so much cannon fodder for the guns of the historical process.

One more point about Howe's socialism needs to be made—if ever so speculatively. It strikes me that Howe's socialism, though deeply felt, is peripheral to his intellectual interests. Unlike Hayek or Harrington, who are first and foremost political analysts (Hayek of course is also a distinguished economist), Howe is first and foremost a literary and cultural critic. The Howe who writes about the work of Thomas Hardy or the world of Yiddish culture reveals a stronger, more discriminating, more *critical* mind than the Howe who writes about the necessity for socialism. Though they differ as to their conclusions, both Harrington and Hayek, unlike Howe, have looked closely at the complex mechanisms of current socio-political structures, grappling with the difficult questions raised by the claims of distributive justice.

HARRINGTON, unlike Howe, plunges into the troubled waters of socialist theory. Yet he is distinctly less critical than Howe of some aspects of the socialist tradition. Harrington is, in fact, a Marxian true believer: Marx's collected works are his socialist Bible, and Marx himself is, if not God, at least "the foe of every dogma, champion of human freedom and democratic socialist. . . ." Lest these words make some blink in astonishment, Harrington hastens to add that the original Marxian message has been betrayed by Marxism: what goes under the name of Marxian socialism is not the real thing. And, like a radical Protestant ransacking the Bible to prove that all the accretions of Roman Catholicism have dis-

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torted the original meaning of the Gospel, Harrington burrows into Marx and comes up with text upon text to show that Marx not only "regarded democracy as the essence of socialism," but that Marx is also "the oracle in the ruins of the bourgeois order, which . . . is heading inexorably toward a final collapse. . . ."

If this language seems fundamentalist, it is. Arguing that we look to Marx for an understanding of past, present, and future, Harrington sounds like a Baptist preacher. Marxian analysis, he says, provides us with "the secret history of our crisis." And with the help of Marxian analysis, we might be able to "change human nature, making man more peaceful and cooperative."

As a faithful Marxist, Harrington works hard to prove the eternal relevance of the Master. More than half the contents of his latest books—*Socialism** and *The Twilight of Capitalism*†—are devoted to an exegesis of Marx. Though Harrington, like any fundamentalist, modestly assures us that he has not discovered "this authentic Marx" on his own, his homework is impressive. He has obviously done a good deal of laboring in the Marxian vineyard; we are treated to voluminous footnotes that refer to the Master's texts and that also discriminate among the myriad Marxian heresies, with Harrington—more in sorrow than in anger—telling us how so-and-so misunderstood the sacred canon.

Harrington is impressive as a Marxist preacher, dazzling us with his fund of quotations from Marx's massive *oeuvre* and the ease with which he makes Marx seem *the* way of viewing the disordered present and *the* way of insuring a humane future. Though at times he seems (to change my religious metaphor) Jesuitically clever in the way he makes Marx come out democratically clean in the wash, on many points of interpretation he is convincing. In any case, it would be foolish to risk battle with Harrington on the intricacies of the Marxian canon, for Marx—Harrington assures us—requires the labor of a lifetime.

Yet the very wizardry with which Harrington finesses the reader's doubts is itself unsettling: the Marxian answers come so thick and fast that one eventually wants fresh air—wants to get out of this oppressive and confining room. Unfortunately, the few times Harrington moves away from Marx—or, rather, locates Marx within the broad stream of European intellectual history—he tends to sum up the complexities he is dealing with by packaging them in such glibly reductive phrases as "capitalist intellectual life" or "capitalist stream of consciousness." Harrington's learning is deep but narrow.

But more important than one's doubts about the intellectual framework that supports Harrington's interpretation of Marx is one's puzzlement as to just what is proved by all these twistings and turnings in search of the "authentic" Marx. Let us say that Harrington is right about Marx's being a democrat; this in itself is neither here nor there—an exciting point in the history of ideas perhaps, but not the foundation on which to build a new society. What Harrington must do is show how the Marxian paradigm makes sense both as an explanation of the present discontents and as a reliable guide to a more well-ordered and humane future. And in this endeavor he fails badly.

I have used the word paradigm advisedly, for Harrington argues that there are "some distinctively Marxist questions, and ways of answering them" that constitute a Marxian paradigm. The word paradigm is borrowed from Thomas Kuhn, who uses it in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to adumbrate a certain broad conceptual framework that defines the way in which the physicists of any given generation see their scientific problems. Physics, Kuhn argues, does not "progress" by gradual steps, with more light increasingly being shed upon the dark areas of nature, but by sudden leaps whereby radically new ways of looking upon the world—that is, paradigms—totally alter the way physicists look upon their work.

Though the notion of paradigms remains a controversial one in the history of science, Harrington jumps at the chance to appropriate it because it lends his polemics an aura of scientific respectability. Needless to say, though, it is difficult to see how the term applies to Marxism, since for Kuhn a paradigm is accepted by nearly all the physicists working at any given moment in history whereas the Marxian "paradigm" is considered irrelevant by most contemporary political theorists. Moreover, those who do assent to it—those who call themselves Marxists—tend to disagree intensely as to what the essential elements of Marxism are.

Though Harrington does acknowledge that his notion of paradigm differs from Kuhn's, it is hard to know exactly what he means by the word. The Marxian paradigm, he argues, "makes no pretense at being 'value-free'; yet it seeks to be rigorously scientific." The Marxian paradigm is both objective and "in the subjective interest of the socialist struggle. . . ." The Marxian paradigm "suggests that one's analytic view of society will vary according to one's social perspective." This collection of tenets surely does not constitute a paradigm. It is, rather, a potpourri of logically contradictory categories, one that betrays Harrington's emotional commitment to Marxism and his desperate need to believe that Marxism is the objective truth. No doubt some Master of Dialectics can reconcile these contradictory qualities, sorting out all the elements of the muddle. But even he, I suspect,

* Saturday Review Press (1972).
† Simon & Schuster, 446 pp., $10.95.

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would throw up his hands in bewilderment when confronted with Harrington's strange notion that the eventual movement *away* from the Marxian paradigm "can be accomplished in a Marxist spirit. . . ."

Harrington also believes that the Marxian paradigm is "critical about its own definitions. . . ." Nothing could be further from the truth. Such critical thinking is impossible, since the "paradigm" remains impervious to theorizing—that is, it reduces any non-Marxian explanation of its workings to Marxian categories. As a self-enclosed system that can "explain" everything, the paradigm is attractive to those seeking a "secret history" that makes sense of the well-nigh bewildering social and economic forces at play in the world. But as a way of reading current problems, which Harrington elsewhere blames on the "abomination" that is "our antisocial economic system," the paradigm's very ability to come up with answers for everything severely limits its analytical usefulness. (I say "limits," for Marxist theory does have its uses, when applied cautiously and precisely.)

WHEN Harrington descends from the giddy heights of his Marxian paradigm, he is often an able polemicist, especially about some aspects of recent American history. Specifically, when he deals with the American labor movement and the cold war he makes some telling criticisms of fashionable revisionist historians; and he is, as I have said, strongly anti-Communist. Nevertheless, to anyone devoted to preserving the basic freedoms that exist in the representative democracies of the West, Harrington's arguments in favor of a socialist future are disturbing—disturbing in the way he glosses over the serious difficulties of implementing a radical redistribution of society's resources, disturbing in the way he is cavalier about the *political* form such a radically new society would take. And, despite his obvious desire to appear reasonable, realistic, and cautious, Harrington is a utopian, and a somewhat fanatical one at that—a man so deeply committed to making the socialist dream a reality that he doesn't especially seem to care about the kind of political reality this radically new future will bring. Reading Harrington one does not find the kind of commitment to liberty that one finds in Howe.

These are strong charges, so let me be more specific. No one except die-hard laissez-faire capitalists would argue nowadays that corporate interests should necessarily take precedence over all other considerations. The trouble is: how do we determine these other considerations? The common good is notoriously difficult to define; there are many "common goods," so it behooves us to proceed cautiously in our concern for the welfare of others, recognizing that, as Hayek has said, "individual freedom rests chiefly on the recognition of the inevitable ignorance of all of us concerning a great many of the factors on which the achievement of our ends and welfare depends."

Harrington, though, has no such doubts. According to him, the basic problem with so-called capitalist societies is that they are "suffused with commercial values." Such societies are in effect ruled by the "antisocial" tyranny of "corporate interests" and "private rights," to the detriment of the "common good" of the whole society. The common good, he implies, is self-evident. All we need do is get rid of commercialism, whatever that means, and charge ahead: ". . . education, health, and personal problems are obviously antagonistic to commercialism, for these are spheres in which one should never stint in order to cut costs and increase the return. The only humane criterion is that of need. . . ."

Again, one raises the obvious question: how is need determined? Need is an even hazier notion than the common good, for the latter implies that some group—no matter how small—has gotten together to clarify the extent of its claims upon the state, whereas the former is essentially a personal claim that—except for the obvious needs of food, clothing, and shelter—one would have an enormous difficulty in defining in any reasonable way. (Even minimal needs are difficult to assess: food, clothing, and shelter may require less outlay of funds in Arizona than in Alaska.) If, as Harrington hopes, the dread god Commercialism is slain and the benign god Planning is put on the throne, the result may be a kind of collectivist chaos, with millions of supplicants screaming "I need! I need!" What mechanism will serve as the Solomon who can deal with these conflicting claims in a fair and responsible way?

Democracy is Harrington's all-purpose answer. The determination of the "socially necessary" would be by means of democratic planning. According to Harrington, such democratic planning will only work when society has reached a level of abundance, so that all needs (including, for Harrington, the personal problems of the citizenry) could theoretically be satisfied—so that there would not be, in theory at least, any conflicting claims. Thus Harrington invokes the god of democratic planning the way Adam Smith invoked the god of the invisible hand: out of all this democratic activity a benign and fair order will come.

Yet even given such abundance—surely a utopian hope for most nations of the world—it is not clear how the people composing this democratic structure would have the time, in addition to the wisdom, to handle the awesome amount of planning necessary to run this new society. Furthermore, even a society so organized that the power to plan would be dispersed among numerous communities would not necessarily be concerned with what Marxists call "formal" freedoms. A state that

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administered to the needs of a democratic majority might be one that ran roughshod over the freedoms and the needs of minorities—might, say, refuse to publish one of Harrington's books, might even arrest Harrington for his "antisocial" behavior. It might be in the interest of such a well-planned and democratically-run state to do away with an "antisocial" minority that objected to the supposedly fair and benign way the state ordered its citizens around.

I have stressed the word "antisocial" because it is one of Harrington's favorite phrases. It surely is either tactless or naive of him to use such a phrase, however, when the regimes of Russia and Eastern Europe have put an uncounted number of persons away in labor camps because they were guilty of "antisocial" behavior. Harrington is not opposed to the formal freedoms and rights that aid in protecting people from the depredations of the state, but he is remarkably casual about the relation between the collectivism he sees as inevitable and the political structure such a society would have—saying only that "whether the totalitarian or the authoritarian or the democratic-socialist variant of the collectivist future will prevail is a question that will be determined by political and social struggle."

This answer does not take into account that when such "struggles" have as their aim a utopian transformation it is easy to forget about legalistic niceties like rights and freedoms. And Harrington's aim is certainly a utopian one, for he dreams of a society without "invidious competition," a society of cooperation, fraternity, and equality, a society where work and money will be abolished. Harrington is not certain that this society will come into existence; he *is* certain that capitalism will destroy itself and that "human life will be radically transformed in the medium range of the future. . . ." Whether this radical transformation will usher in a humane democratic-socialist society or another totalitarian nightmare depends, according to Harrington, on whether or not we pay heed to the democratic wisdom of Marx. If we do, then the dream will be fulfilled; if not, the nightmare.

From time to time we are obliged to listen to sages who warn us of radical transformations. More disturbing than the threat of future shock is the persistent hope in utopian change. The "correct" formula in these matters is, I suspect, the opposite of Harrington's. On the relationship between utopian thinking and the realities of political life, the last word should be given to Leszek Kolakowski, who is very much aware of the dangers inherent in the overweening pretensions of Marxian thought. According to Kolakowski, the socialist dream "may come true only in the form of a caricature which denies its original intentions. . . ." In his urge to resurrect Marx, Harrington has not faced the possibility that even an "authentic" Marxism may contain the seeds of despotism—that Marxian thought, owing to its utopian belief that man can leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, inevitably is only "realized" through totalitarian regimes. To quote Kolakowski again: "And there is no reason to expect that this dream can ever become true except in the cruel form of despotism; and despotism is a desperate simulation of paradise." In this sense, then, the Communist regimes of Russia and Eastern Europe may well be expressions of an "authentic" Marxism. Harrington's belief in a democratic Marxism is, in Saint Anselm's words, a faith in search of understanding. Unfortunately the understanding is not adequate to the faith.

HARRINGTON is on the editorial board of *Dissent* and appears regularly in its pages. Though devoted to the values of socialism, *Dissent* publishes articles subjecting the notion of socialism to scrutiny. Indeed, Harrington himself was criticized in a recent issue—the writer questioning Harrington's rather protean notion of socialism and also arguing that "an expansion of the role of the state cannot of itself result in a more rational, or productive, or more socially acceptable use of resources." Michael Walzer, who recently became *Dissent*'s co-editor, has said that socialist writers have never had anything especially interesting to say about the state. And back in the 50's the French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, warned that socialists, in their preoccupation with a more equitable distribution of resources, were inclined to ignore the greater opportunities for political tyranny such "rational" planning invited —a warning, by the way, very much like Hayek's in *The Constitution of Liberty*.

Many of *Dissent*'s contributors would acknowledge the force of Ricoeur's warning, but they nevertheless instinctively look to the state to make good the claims of social justice, hoping to limit the power of the people at the center of the political-bureaucratic wheel by decentralizing, as much as possible, the decision-making process. Thus Walzer argues in favor of "a politics of immediate self-government, a politics of (relatively) small groups." In another essay, however, Walzer questions the massive commitment to political activity that such a participatory democracy would require. Socialism, he ruefully admits, would require too many evenings. Harrington also gets mired in similar inconsistencies—warning, in a recent article, of the "political and economic costs of a totally centralized economy," yet six paragraphs later calling for a national transportation plan, a national bank, and federal chartering of all major corporations!

If the particular proposals socialists make are at times inconsistent, they are often also like the proposals so-called capitalists make—for example, the federal chartering of major corporations or worker

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participation in corporate management. The latter notion, called co-determination, has long been successfully in practice in supposedly capitalist West Germany. What remains of socialism if particular socialist proposals have been "co-opted," as the New Left would have it, by clever capitalists intent on preserving the "system"? Can we argue that socialists, unlike "bourgeois-democratic" reformers, are committed to a radical egalitarianism? If so then we must throw Howe out of the socialist camp, for he has said that "a society which insists upon enforcing an absolute egalitarianism can do so only by destroying liberties."

Is socialism, then, nothing more than a vague moral commitment to social justice? Stuart Hampshire has said as much, arguing that for him socialism "is not so much a theory as a set of moral injunctions. . . ." Yet we cannot dismiss socialism with a "nothing more than." Socialists may be irritating in the way they advertise their moral superiority, as if they alone are concerned about the "oppressed"; and socialists may be disturbing in the way they—gleefully, it seems—interpret every economic recession as a sign of "Western capitalism . . . in crisis," to quote Harrington again. Yet without socialists to remind us of the "other America" that does not participate in the general affluence, we might find it easier to ignore the very real problem of distributive justice. As Raymond Aron, who is not a socialist, has said: "In the struggle against a certain form of complacency on the part of privileged persons who tend to put up with the poverty of the majority provided their formal freedoms are respected, the Marxist protest has lost none of its relevance and force."

But such moral energies are not in themselves equal to the task of social reconstruction. In fact, if they are tied to a theory that is intellectually threadbare they may be positively harmful—a debate about social justice conceived in terms that are of little use to all concerned, especially the oppressed. As a map for reading the contemporary landscape, the theory—or theories—of socialism is badly in need of revision. What needs emphasizing, while we search for theories that make better sense of the complex socio-political realities of the West (or for that matter the whole world), is that the debate as to how society can eliminate poverty and effect a more reasonable distribution of its resources can only take place if its citizens possess the so-called formal freedoms Marxists traditionally have been quick to disparage.

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An Exchange of Populations

Joan Peters

MORE THAN sixty million persons have become refugees since World War II. Of these, most have been resettled and rehabilitated in the countries to which they fled, seeking asylum. Indeed, the world community has long considered the resettlement and integration of refugees in their host countries to be a moral obligation of the highest order, and this understanding has been embodied in international law. Except after military victory, there have been no instances of the successful mass repatriation of any refugee group once it has become absorbed in its host country.

The one striking exception to the general rule is the situation of the Arab refugees in the Middle East. The Arabs who left Palestine during Israel's War of Independence in 1948-49 have to this day not been resettled or rehabilitated in the Arab countries to which they fled. On the contrary, the Arab states have refused to absorb or integrate their brethren into their respective societies; instead they have made the "restoration" of the "legitimate rights" of these refugees—namely, their repatriation to Jewish Palestine in a position of sovereignty they never previously enjoyed—the central demand in their confrontation with Israel: the "heart of the matter." This demand runs counter to all historical precedent and the universal present-day practice of mankind, yet it seems to have the approval and endorsement of a majority of the world community.

That this should be so is a tribute primarily to the success of Arab propaganda in persuading the world that in the Middle East the cause of justice lies on one side and one side only. That, however, is a serious distortion of truth, with respect to the "refugee problem" no less than with respect to the general situation. With respect to the refugee problem, the truth is that an *exchange of populations* has taken place between Israel and the Arab countries. Far from being a case simply of Palestinian Arabs fleeing from Jews, what occurred in the Middle East in the late 1940's was a flight of refugees in *both* directions almost simultaneously. For every Arab refugee—adult or child—now competing for the sympathy of the world from Syria, Lebanon, or Jordan, there is a Jewish refugee now living in Israel who fled or was expelled from the Arab land of his birth where he and his ancestors had lived for two thousand years. Indeed, so symmetrical is the historical record that the actual numbers on each side are almost exactly the same—about 700,000 Palestinian Arabs versus about 700,000 Jews from Arab lands. And so far as property goes, the tradeoff leans, if anything, to the benefit of the Arabs, who confiscated Jewish-held assets in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and elsewhere. The difference is that where the Israeli government, from the beginning, took it upon itself to attempt to integrate its refugees into society, the Arab states, successfully flouting precedent and disregarding the claims of conscience, have kept their fellow-Arab refugees in a condition of unremitting squalor and poverty.

JOAN PETERS contributed the much-discussed article, "In Search of Moderate Egyptians," to our May 1975 number. The present essay, in a somewhat different version and augmented by transcripts of interviews with Jewish refugees from Arab lands, will form part of her forthcoming book on the Middle East conflict.

I

"BEFORE the Jewish state was established there existed nothing to harm good relations between Arabs and Jews." Thus, to Henry Kissinger, spoke the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, a country which Jews are not even allowed to enter. The king was repeating a cliché which has attained something of the status of a myth: that, unlike the history of the Jews under Christendom, the history of the Jews under Islam was one of tranquility, equality, and friendship—until the advent of Zionism. Yet the assertion of Muslim tolerance is only a myth; one would have to search far indeed in doctrine and in historical practice to find substantial evidence of it as a reality. The fact that during certain short-lived periods Jews under Arab domination did achieve a greater degree of security than Jews often experienced in Christian lands should not be allowed to obscure the essential record, which is one of political subjugation, social humiliation, and officially decreed religious inferiority.

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This inferiority is prescribed in the Koran itself, and is elaborated upon in the *hadith*, the traditional sayings attributed to the prophet Muhammad. Wherever Jews have lived under Islam, their condition has been determined by the legal ordinances of the Koran, which forbids followers of Muhammad from dealings with Jews, promises their eventual downfall and ignominy "because they disbelieve the revelations of Allah and slew the prophets wrongly," and in general denounces them as the enemies of the faith. It was to such Koranic imprecations that President Sadat of Egypt referred in 1972 when he said of Jerusalem: "We shall take it out of the hands of those of whom the Koran said, 'It is written that they shall be demeaned and made wretched.' . . . We shall celebrate the defeat of Israeli arrogance so that they shall return and be as the Koran said of them, a people 'condemned to humiliation and misery.'"

The 7th-century Covenant of Omar delineates the twelve laws under which a *dhimmi*, or non-Muslim, was allowed to exist as a non-believer among believers. The charter codified the conditions of life for Jews (and Christians) under Islam—a life which became forfeit if the law was broken. According to the Covenant, Jews were compelled to wear a distinctive (sometimes dark-blue or black) habit with sash, and a yellow piece of cloth as badge; they were not allowed to perform their religious practices in public, or to own a horse; they were forbidden to drink wine in public; and they were required to bury their dead without letting their grief be heard by the Muslims. Islam's religious law decreed the lightest of penalties for a Muslim who murdered a non-Muslim; the testimony of a Jew (or Christian) against a Muslim was held invalid. As payment for being allowed so to live, the *dhimmi* paid a special head-tax and a special property tax.

These and other harsh restrictions of the Covenant were carried down through the centuries, implemented with varying degrees of cruelty or flexibility depending upon the character of a particular Muslim ruler. The extra head-tax, for example, was enforced in some form until 1909 in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey, until 1925 in Iran, and in Yemen until the present day. Throughout the centuries, the Jews were the first to suffer in times of economic turmoil or political upheaval, and were also the victims of sporadic mass murders.

In the 20th century, with the departure of the European colonial powers from the Middle East, the old Muslim attitude toward Jews—superior, condescending, possessive—came to be replaced by one of open hatred. Nazi anti-Semitism found a receptive home here in the 1930's and 1940's. As early as 1940 the Mufti of Jerusalem requested the Axis powers to acknowledge the Arab right "to settle the question of Jewish elements in Palestine and other Arab countries in accordance with the national and racial interests of the Arabs and along lines similar to those used to solve the Jewish question in Germany and Italy." Hitler's crimes against the Jews have frequently been justified in Arab writings and pronouncements. In the 1950's Anwar Sadat, then a government minister, published an "open letter" to Hitler expressing the hope that he was still alive and would yet resume his interrupted cause.

The anti-Semitic literature (including *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and many official school texts) published by the Arabs since World War II has been voluminous, and is continually increasing, despite the almost total evacuation of Jews from the Arab world. The virulence of the literature aside, what is significant about it is its official origin—it is the product not of an extremist fringe but of Arab governments, including those called moderate.* And in the meantime the image of the Jew has taken on new colorations: despised for centuries as a non-believer, portrayed in the modern Arab world as the demoniacal incarnation of evil, the Jew living in an Arab country after the rise of Zionism and the establishment of the state of Israel came to be calumniated, as well, as a fifth columnist, a foreign agent, a *de facto* spy. This was the climate from which the Jews of Arab lands fled.

II

OF NEARLY 900,000 Jews who lived in Arab lands in 1948, only 35,420 now remain. The Arab world has been nearly emptied of its large and ancient Jewish communities.

The entire *Yemenite* community of Jews, almost 50,000, swarmed into Israel via "Operation Magic Carpet" in 1948. Yemenite Jewry, whose history went back 2500 years, was fleeing from what the historian S. D. Goitein has described as

* Some examples drawn from educational texts:
A history text for third year junior-high-school students, Jordan: "The Jews in Europe were persecuted and despised because of their corruption, meanness, and treachery."

From a religious-studies reader, second year of junior high school, Syria: "The Jews . . . lived exiled and despised since by their nature they are vile, greedy, and enemies of mankind."

An elementary-school exercise in syntax and spelling, Syria: "Analyze the following sentences. 1. The merchant traveled to the African continent. 2. We shall expel all the Jews from Arab countries."

A favored subject in much Arab anti-Semitic literature is the infamous Damascus blood libel of 1840. In 1962 the Egyptian Ministery of Education brought out an official book, *Human Sacrifices in the Talmud* (a reprint of a work dating from 1890), which repeats the charge that Jews use human blood for ritual purposes, and in 1973 a former minister in the Egyptian foreign service published a play based on the same idea.

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"the worst aspect" of Arab mistreatment of Jews. A Yemenite law had decreed that fatherless Jewish children under thirteen be taken from their mothers and raised as Muslims. Goitein writes: "To my mind, this law, which was enforced with new vigor about fifty years ago, more than anything else compelled the Jews to quit that country to which they were very much attached. . . . The result was that many families arrived in Israel with one or more of their children lost to them. . . ." The stoning of Jews was still practiced in Yemen at the time of the 1948 exodus.

From *Iraq*, between the years 1949 and 1952 alone, 123,371 Jews fled to Israel, leaving their assets and communal holdings behind. Iraqi Jews took pride in their distinguished community, with its history of scholarship and honor. Under the British mandate many were writers, traders, and physicians, and some had become quite wealthy through commerce and banking. All this ended when Iraq declared independence in 1932. Almost immediately afterward, increasingly violent demonstrations took place over the "Palestine problem"; many Iraqi Jews were murdered by agitated mobs, nitric acid was thrown by terrorists upon Jews in the street, and bombs were flung into synagogues. In 1941 the violence exploded into a bloody *farhud*—massacre—of the Jews, with the police openly participating in the attack; at least 150 were killed, hundreds more were wounded, and more than a thousand Jewish-owned houses and businesses were looted and destroyed. That same year, the Iraqi Minister of Justice proclaimed that "Judaism is a threat to mankind." From then on Jews suffered indiscriminate torture, imprisonment without charge, and relentless persecution.

When Iraq joined the Arab war against Israel in May 1948, government terror increased; Jews were forbidden to leave the country, and many fortunes were extorted or confiscated. Zionism was made a capital crime, and Jews were publicly hanged in the center of Baghdad. (A Dutch Jew was hanged as a "Zionist" in Iraq less than a year ago.) Although no laws authorized the confiscation of Jewish property before 1950, the Jews were stripped of millions of dollars through economic discrimination, "voluntary donations" appropriated by the government, and other subterfuges. An Egyptian journal reported in 1948 that all Iraqi Jews who went to Palestine and did not return would be tried *in absentia* as criminals. Those who were tried *in absentia* were sentenced to hang or serve extended prison sentences. Perhaps because of the desperate financial condition of the Iraqi government, Jewish "emigration" was later legalized—upon confiscation of property and permanent loss of citizenship. The Jews left their accumulated holdings behind, and within the first three years of the law, most fled. As of 1975, only 400 of this ancient and distinguished community of 150,000 remained behind.

In 1948, 75,000 Jews lived in *Egypt*; today there are 350, the remnant of a community dating back millennia. Under Ottoman rule, Egyptian Jews had flourished; despite occasional eruptions of hostility toward them, their standard of living into the 20th century was much better than in most other Arab countries. Yet by the late 1930's Egyptian nationalism, Arab hatred of Zionists, and Nazi propaganda combined to erupt violently against the Jews. The first major incident was the burning of synagogues, churches, and other communal buildings belonging to non-Muslims. From 1945 on, many Jews were killed or injured in organized riots. Jews suffered extensive economic losses when the Egyptians passed a law that largely excluded Jews from employment; the government confiscated much Jewish property and wrecked the economic situation of the Jews within a few months. In 1948 anti-Jewish riots were rampant. According to one account, in one seven-day period, 150 Jews were murdered or seriously wounded. With the outbreak of the 1948 war, Egyptian Jews were barred from leaving Egypt, whether to go to Israel or elsewhere. Then, early in August 1949, the ban was abruptly lifted, and much sequestered Jewish property was returned. From August until November of that year, more than 20,000 of Egypt's 75,000 Jews fled, many to Israel. A brief period of tolerance under General Naguib was followed by the takeover of Gamal Nasser who instituted mass arrests of Jews and confiscation of their property.

After the Sinai campaign of 1956, thousands of Egyptian Jews were interned without trial while thousands more were served with deportation papers and ordered to leave within a few days; their property was confiscated, their assets frozen, and they were forced to acknowledge in writing that they were leaving voluntarily. When the Six-Day War began in 1967, many Jews were again arrested and held in camps where they were beaten and whipped, deprived of water for days on end, and forced to chant anti-Israel slogans. By 1970, these Jews too had left the country. "Egypt," according to the officer in charge of one internment camp, "has no place for the Jews." By 1975, Egypt was virtually *Judenrein*.

From North Africa more than 300,000 Jews have crowded into Israel since 1948. Almost 250,000 of these are from what is now *Morocco*, where Jews have lived since the destruction of the First Temple. Down through the 19th century, Jewish existence in Morocco remained insecure and tenuous. Under Islam, André Chouraqui has written, the Jews of Morocco were subjected at various times to "such repression, restriction, and humiliation as to exceed anything in [Christian] Europe" except for the Nazi Holocaust.

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Charles de Foucauld, a French Christian officer who in 1883-84 posed as a rabbi in an intelligence-gathering mission, was one of many to record Jewish life under Arab rule in 19th-century Morocco:

> . . . Bled white without restraint, . . . they are the most unfortunate of men. . . . Every Jew belongs, body and soul, to his *sid* [Muslim seigneur] . . . he came in the *sid*'s possession through inheritance as part of his personal belongings under the rules of Muslim law . . . or [if] he settled only recently in the place where he lived, then immediately upon arrival he had to become some Muslim's Jew. . . . Once having rendered homage, he was bound forever, he and his descendants. . . . Nothing in the world protected the Jew against his *sid*: he was entirely at his mercy.

By contrast, in those regions of Morocco which were under Turkish rule the Jewish condition was less desperate, and some Jews even achieved a measure of affluence.

French rule came to Morocco in 1912 and brought welcome relief for the Jews, despite a pogrom in Fez that killed sixty Jews and left 10,000 homeless, and despite the fact that (unlike Algeria and Tunisia), Jews remained under local Arab rule. By 1948, Jews had even become nominally involved in local politics. When Israel was established, the French authorities strove to maintain calm between the Muslim and Jewish communities, and the Muslim sultan appealed to his subjects not to commit violence against the Jews. Yet early in June 1948, mob violence erupted simultaneously against the Jewish communities of several towns in Northern Morocco, and dozens of Jews were killed. Shortly afterward, the first major group of Moroccan Jews—30,000—fled to Israel. The fate of Morocco's Jewish community fluctuated with each strong political wind: Moroccan independence was declared in 1956 and although emigration to Israel was declared illegal, 70,000 more managed to reach the Jewish state. The Sultan's return was followed by appointment of Jews to major government posts; in 1959, Zionism became a crime. Two years later the new king attempted to appease the Jews by legalizing emigration: another 100,000 made their way to Israel. Israel's victory in the 1967 war brought heightened hostility from the Muslims, and by 1975 Moroccan Jewry had shrunk to less than 10 per cent of its former number. The 25,000 who remain reportedly live well, and King Hassan is anxious for them to stay, but many Jewish schools are now run by Muslims, there has been no Jewish press since 1960, and occasionally there are renewed anti-Israel demonstrations.

THE *Algerian* Jewish community generally shared the treatment of Moroccan Jews. In the 1930's the ascent of Nazi Germany, reinforcing Muslim attitudes of the past, gave rise to new waves of anti-Semitism; a massacre at Constantine in 1934 left twenty-five Jews slain, dozens wounded, and Jewish property pillaged. In 1940, when the Vichy government took over, Jews were stripped of French citizenship, banned from schools and public activities, and legally rendered "pariahs." Only the Allied landing prevented the transfer of Algerian Jews to European death camps. (However, Messali Hadj, the "father of the Algerian nationalist movement," refused to support Nazi Germany.) After World War II, Jews were caught in the middle of the struggle for Algerian independence between the French and the nationalists, and in addition Algeria had now forged stronger links with the Arab League. The Jewish community of Algeria which had numbered 140,000 in 1948 diminished within months at the height of hostilities in the early 1960's; about 14,000 Jews fled to Israel and 125,000 went to France. The Jewish population in Algeria now numbers 500.

Tunisian Jews were somewhat better off than either their Algerian or Moroccan brothers throughout the last centuries, but the separate Jewish quarter of Tunis was not much less squalid and miserable than were other North African *mellahs* or *haras*—Jewish ghettos—before French rule. When Tunisia became independent in 1956, a Jew was included in the Bourguiba cabinet, yet the Jews of Tunisia were soon forced to flee from the extremism which the "Arabization" policy of the government now fostered. Of 105,000 Jews in 1948, only 200 are living in Tunisia today; 50,000 emigrated to Israel and many others have gone to France.

Jewish history in *Syria* dates back to biblical times. By 70 C.E. 10,000 Jews dwelled in Damascus, and a consistent Jewish presence was maintained there for more than two millennia despite periodic eruptions of violence, the best-known of which in modern times was the Damascus blood libel of 1840—it is still being invoked to this day. The French, assigned mandatory rights over Syria in 1920, made persistent attempts to protect the Jews from attack by Arabs, but the growing dispute over neighboring Palestine in the 1930's crystallized local hostility and brought anti-Jewish riots in 1936. In 1937 a Nazi delegation paid a visit to Damascus, intensifying the level of anti-Jewish propaganda and bringing about closer affiliations between German and Arab youth organizations. From Damascus, the Arab Defense Committee warned the Jewish Agency: "Your attitude will lead you and the Jews of the East to the worst of calamities that has been written in history up to the present. . . ." In 1944 and '45 the Jewish quarter was raided; in the latter year Syria won its independence, and the Damascus Mufti warned at a religious conference that if Jewish immigration to Palestine were not halted, all countries of Islam would declare a "holy war" against the Jews.

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Shortly afterward a Syrian student mob celebrated a Muslim holiday by desecrating the Great Synagogue of Aleppo, beating Jews at prayer and burning prayer books in the street. Government intimidation was initiated, and Jews were prohibited from leaving the country. Jewish leaders were forced to denounce Zionism publicly.

In December 1947 anti-Jewish feeling climaxed in a vicious pogrom; Syrian mobs poured into the *mellah* of Aleppo and burned down most of the synagogues, destroyed 150 Jewish homes, five Jewish schools, fifty shops and offices, an orphanage, and a youth club. Holy scrolls, including a priceless ancient manuscript of the Old Testament, were burned, while the firemen stood by and police "actively helped the attackers." By early 1947 only 13,000 Jews remained in Syria of an estimated 30,000 four years earlier. Letters smuggled out of Syria told of a "war against Zionists [which] has turned into a war against the entire Jewish people. . . ."

Since that time regimes have come and gone in Syria, but except for brief periods Syria's ever-diminishing Jewish community has remained huddled together in a ghetto, without collective or individual rights. Despite government-monitored or staged media presentations for propaganda purposes, the only candid reports available on the condition of the Jews in Syria are those of escapees. The plight of Syria's Jews—menaced both by officialdom and by hostile Palestinian Arabs who have been moved into the homes left by Jewish escapees—has become an international issue of human rights, and world attention has been focused on the government's repressive tactics. No one knows what will become of the 4,350 Jews still in Syria.

The Jews of *Lebanon*—a country about which, at this point, it is difficult to generalize—have historically enjoyed greater freedom than any other Jewish community living in the Arab world. In fact, many Jews fled to Lebanon from other Arab lands in the years following Israel's independence, boosting the Jewish population there to 9,000 by 1958. In that year, in the wake of the attempted revolution in Lebanon, the Jews began to depart; the 1967 war and the infiltration of Lebanon by Arab terrorists caused most to flee. The latest figure estimates the number of Jews still in Lebanon at 1,800, but that figure was calculated prior to the recent warfare there between Muslims and Christians, which has produced many Christian refugees and undoubtedly some Jewish ones.

Libya's Jewish community has virtually disappeared. Of the 38,000 Jews whose roots were deep in the North African terrain that is Libya today, perhaps twenty are left. Most fled in the years after World War II, which saw virtually unceasing violence against a community that had already suffered horribly during the war. One violent anti-Jewish pogrom, in November 1945, was described by Clifton Daniel in the New York *Times*: "Babies were beaten to death with iron bars. . . . Old men were hacked to pieces where they fell. . . . Expectant mothers were disemboweled. Whole families were burned alive in their houses." By the time Libya achieved independence in 1952, there were only 8,000 Jews remaining to attempt to take advantage of the equality purportedly offered under the new constitution. Libya's entry into the Arab League made life even more hazardous, and with the renewal of Arab mob violence after the Six-Day War of 1967 Libya's remaining Jews were forced literally to run for their lives, leaving behind everything they owned; most became a part of Israel's refugee community.

WHAT THIS cursory survey indicates is an unwavering pattern all over the Arab world, and reaching far back into history. No Arab nation has ever accepted the Jews (or any other minority) on an equal footing in its midst, none has given any sign of a readiness to do so, despite all the PLO talk of a "secular democratic" state to be established in Palestine. No Arab state today is or has ever been secular; none is or has ever been democratic. It is in light of this melancholy fact, indeed, that one should understand the extraordinarily cynical "invitation" recently extended by various Arab governments, amid much publicity, to Jewish refugees from Arab lands, to return to their countries of birth and resume there the life of "harmony and amity" which they supposedly left behind. Responding to one such "invitation," by Libya's President Qaddafi, the Tunisian-born writer Albert Memmi summed up the real plight of the Jews from Arab lands, and contrasted it to that of the Palestinian Arabs:

> Do you believe that the Jews who were born in Arab countries can go back, where they had been robbed, massacred, and from which they had been expelled? . . . When all is said and done, the disaster of the Arabs in Palestine amounts to their having been displaced for some fifty kilometers within the same enormous Arab nation. How much more serious is our case: we Jews from Arab countries have been displaced for thousands of kilometers, after having lost everything.

III

QUITE some time before the 1947 Partition Plan which proposed the division of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state, there were many British advocates of an exchange of populations—the Arabs of Palestine for the Jews in Arab countries—to facilitate the formation of homogeneous populations in the envisioned new sovereignties. (Modern precendents for such an exchange include those between Turkey and Bulgaria in 1913 and between Turkey and

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Greece in the 1920's; in the postwar period perhaps the best-known example of an exchange of populations is that between Indian and Pakistan in the 1950's—8½ million Sikhs and Hindus from Pakistan to India, an almost equal number of Muslims from India to Pakistan.) Among the arguments advanced in favor of the proposed Arab-Jewish exchange was that of the British Colonial Secretary in 1937, who observed before a hearing of the Mandate commission that since the Arabs living in the Jewish areas of Palestine "had not hitherto regarded themselves as Palestinians but as part of Syria, as part of the Arab world as a whole," they would be "going to a people with the same civilization" and "therefore the problem of transfer would be easy." In fact, a preponderance of the approximately 650,000 Arabs living in Jewish Palestine in the mid-40's were relatively recent arrivals, having been attracted there by the affluence and work opportunities created by the Jews (a circumstance that in itself gives the lie to present-day claims of a centuries-old Arab "Palestinian identity").

As is well known, neither the proposal for a Jewish state nor the plan for an exchange of Arab and Jewish populations won the approval of the Arabs themselves. They rejected the 1947 UN Partition of Palestine, and instigated hostilities immediately upon Israel's declaration of independence. Ironically, it was as a result of these Arab hostilities that the war of independence and the Arab-Jewish population exchange *did* take place.

At the time of the 1948 war the invading Arab governments were certain of a quick victory. Arab leaders exhorted their fellow Arabs to leave Jewish Palestine in order to clear the roads for advancing Arab armies and to cause general chaos. They promised a triumphal return after the hostilities, meanwhile creating panic and fear by spreading false stories of Jewish "revenge." The Jews in fact had pleaded with the Arabs to stay. After the Arab defeat, of course, the Arab position changed: now their demand was for the "return" of the "expelled" refugees to their former homes, but only after those homes ceased to be "occupied" by Jews. Emile Ghoury, Secretary of the Arab Higher Command, stated the new Arab position in the Beirut *Telegraph* on August 6, 1948: "It is inconceivable that the refugees should be sent back to their homes while they are occupied by the Jews. . . . It would serve as a first step toward Arab recognition of the state of Israel and Partition." Thus was created the status of semi-permanent refugeehood which the "Palestinian" Arabs have assumed ever since.

Right after the war international experts cited undisputed evidence that resettlement of the Arab refugees within the larger community of Arab nations would not only benefit the refugees but would also contribute needed additional labor forces to the underpopulated and underdeveloped Arab world.* Iraq and Syria seemed especially ideal for such resettlement. A report by President Truman's International Development Advisory Board, headed by Nelson Rockefeller, asserted that Iraq alone could absorb an Arab refugee population of 700,000.† As for Syria, a Chatham House Survey estimated that that country "might well absorb over 200,000 Palestine refugees within five years in agriculture alone." In 1949 an editorial in a Damascus newspaper stated that "Syria needs not only 100,000 refugees, but five million to work the lands and make them fruitful." The paper suggested that the government place these "100,000 refugees in districts where they will build small villages with the money appropriated for this purpose," and in fact Syrian authorities began the experiment by moving 25,000 refugees into areas of potential development in the northern parts of the country. The overthrow of the ruling regime in August 1949 changed the situation, however, and the new leadership reverted to the rigid Arab League position against resettlement.

As late as 1959, UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold reiterated that there were ample means for absorbing the Arab refugees into the economy of the Arab region. Hammarskjold detailed the estimated cost of the refugee absorption, which he proposed be financed by oil revenues and outside aid. But plans for permanent rehabilitation of the refugees were rejected by the Arabs, because such measures would have terminated their status as "refugees" waiting to be repatriated. At a Refugee Conference in Homs, Syria, the Arabs declared: "Any discussion aimed at a solution of the Palestine problem which will not be based on insuring the refugees' right to annihilate Israel will be regarded as a desecration of the Arab people and an act of treason."

Over the years there have been individual Arabs who have admitted in public to the cynical use made of the Arab refu-

* This continues to be the case. This year it has been reported that Saudi Arabia alone is seeking to recruit up to half-a-million workers to develop its growing economy, and an Iraqi official confirmed recently that Iraq is now "inviting Egyptian farmers to settle" there.

† The report also acknowledged explicitly that what had occurred was an actual exchange of populations. At the same time, another authoritative study noted that the flight of Jews from Iraq had opened a gap that could best be filled by Arab refugees from Palestine. Even Arab sources were known to put forward suggestions of this kind. *El-Balad*, a daily paper in Jordanian Jerusalem, stressed the value to Arabs of the Jews' flight from Iraq. According to the paper "roughly 120,000" Jewish refugees had fled Baghdad to go to Israel, leaving all of their goods and homes behind them. "Now the 120,000 Arab refugees could replace the Jews, occupy their houses, and find opportunities to earn a livelihood which had been left vacant." In fact, many of these homes left behind in Syria, Libya, and Iraq by Jewish refugees who fled to Israel are today occupied by Arabs who formerly lived in Palestine.

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gees for propaganda advantages. Khaled El-Azm, who was Syria's prime minister following the 1948 war, wrote in his 1972 memoirs: "Since 1948 it is we who demanded the return of the refugees while it is we who made them leave. . . . We brought disaster upon one million Arab refugees. We rendered them dispossessed, unemployed. . . . We accustomed them to begging and . . . participated in lowering their morale. . . . Then we exploited them in executing crimes of murder, arson, and throwing bombs upon . . . men, women, and children—all this in the service of political purposes in Lebanon and Jordan. Some of them become so accustomed to crime that their thirst for it is never quenched. . . ." Others have gone so far as to acknowledge the reciprocal nature of the refugee question. Thus, Sabri Jiryis of the Institute for Palestine Studies wrote last year in the Beirut journal, *Al Nahar*: "This is hardly the place to describe how the Jews of the Arab states were driven out of their ancient homes, . . . shamefully deported after their property had been commandeered or taken over at the lowest possible valuation." Jiryis envisages a day when Israel will claim, " 'We Israelis entailed the expulsion of some 700,000 Palestinians. However, you Arabs have entailed the expulsion of just as many Jews from the Arab states.' Actually," he goes on, "what happened was a kind of 'population and property exchange,' and each party must bear the consequences. Israel is absorbing the Jews of the Arab states; the Arab states for their part must settle the Palestinians in their own midst and solve their problems. . . ."

BUT these are isolated voices. Today, the official Arab position remains as it was stated in 1949 by the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Salah al-Din: "Let it therefore be known and appreciated that, in demanding the restoration of the refugees to Palestine, the Arabs intend that they shall return as the masters of the homeland. . . . More explicitly: they intend to annihilate the state of Israel." It is in line with this position that the Arab governments over the years have rebuffed every effort to secure the well-being of their refugees, have insisted—without legal or moral foundation—on their "legitimate right of return," and have sought to obscure the fact that, with the exchange of Arab out-migrants from Israel for Jewish out-migrants from Arab lands that occurred in the late 1940's and early 50's, a balance of refugee populations has already been struck in the Middle East.

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Carter and the Jews

Milton Himmelfarb

By now the Democratic party will have nominated Jimmy Carter and everyone will have forgotten how remarkable it is that he should have won at all, let alone weeks before the anticlimactic convention. Most remarkable of all is the harmony that prevails around him in a party much given to faction and contentiousness. There is hardly room on his bandwagon. From Mayor Daley to New York *Times* columnists, no one has a harsh word for him. The many normal Democrats who in 1972 deserted their party because they felt their party had deserted them, or had been snatched from them, appear to be back to normal. The old Democratic coalition is together again: ethnics and blacks, labor and the academy, Catholics and Jews. Now one hardly hears about "the Jewish vote." Only yesterday reporters and commentators were going on and on about the Jews and Jackson, and about Carter's Jewish problem.

That kind of talk in the press is relatively new. There was not much in 1968, or 1964. In 1960, because of President Kennedy's candidacy, there was a lot about the Catholic vote, but in the circumstances that was natural: he was the first Catholic candidate since Al Smith in 1928, the first ever. Before 1972, to harp on "the Jewish vote" would have been thought unseemly, bigoted —by Jews of course but also by journalists themselves. It must have been the new ethnic frankness that released the inhibition then, in a year when all the old landmarks were being removed.

Urgencies behind us and order restored, the time is right for reflection.

Let us start with two unsuccessful candidates for the Democratic nomination, Senator Jackson and Congressman Udall. Because of Jackson's record on Israel and Soviet Jewry, his detractors—not least the Jews among them—called him the Jewish candidate, as if Jews alone were for Jackson, and for Jackson alone. Yet Udall could think it advantageous, in a letter to Americans for Democratic Action, to say that in the Massachusetts primary he was the first choice of the Jewish voters, while Jackson was the first choice of all the voters.

The Jews who preferred Udall to Jackson were on the whole more prosperous, better-educated, younger, and in their outlook more universalist and liberal. (Udall himself, having assessed the popularity of "liberal," insisted on calling himself progressive.) Such Jews tend to be squeamish about "mere" or "narrow" Jewish interests. The Jacksonian Jews, on the whole less prosperous, less well-educated, older, more particularist, were less squeamish. Yet the distinction is overdrawn. I know Jews who contributed both to Jackson and to Udall, though whom they voted for is their secret: you can send money to many but you can vote for only one. Most Jews gave neither money nor votes to Carter. However it may have been in the South, in the rest of the country Jewish Democrats variously preferred Jackson and Udall—and Governor Brown and the non-candidate Senator Humphrey. Only at the end did Carter start to do less badly with Jews.

It was not that Jews thought him an anti-Semite. When a speech-writer had resigned he quoted Carter as saying: "Jackson has all the Jews anyway" (that myth again). "I don't get over 4 per cent of the Jewish vote anyway, so forget it. We get the Christians." I think most Jews understood this to be not anti-Semitism but an application of Goldwater's Law: you go hunting for ducks where the ducks are. Afterward Carter started hunting for Jewish support. He repeated the good things he had long since said about Israel and United States policy toward Israel, and he saw to it that they got publicity. People of standing in the Atlanta Jewish community were rallied to assure Jews outside the South that they knew Carter, and he was all right.

The commentators asked why Jews were less attracted than other Democrats to Carter. Insofar as the answers given were accurate and complete, they tell us something about the Jews of America that will probably still be so in future presidential years. Insofar as the answers were inaccurate or incomplete, that too can tell us something.

Basically the answers were of two sorts, the first having to do with culture and politics and the second with religion. The cultural-political answer, in turn, was about Jews as Americans of a certain kind, first, and then about Jews as Jews. Briefly, it held that if Carter was not attractive to American Jews, neither was he attractive to other Americans who lived where most Jews lived, had gone to the same schools with them, and were part

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of the same political culture—emblematically, Americans uneasy about, if not actually prejudiced against, a Southerner and former professional naval officer, nuclear, who seemed to be a provincial and proud of it. With respect to Jews as Jews, the answer was that Carter had made a virtue of being a stranger to Washington—and Washington was where the Jewish community, in advancing such of its interests as Israel or in furthering its civic and liberal causes, had come to know and to be friendly with politicians even from parts of the country where there are few Jews. Why should Carter be preferred to known friends?

These answers are accurate and complete enough. That cannot be said, however, of the explanation for how Jews felt about Carter's religion.

This explanation featured American Jews remembering a Bible Belt piety that could go nicely with belonging to the KKK or with following Tom Watson, the Georgia populist, anti-Semite, anti-Catholic, and racist. (Watson was responsible for the one lynching of a Jew in American history—Leo Frank, 1915. Because populist, he could be eulogized by E. V. Debs.) The explanation also featured Jews seeing in that piety a legatee of the "imperial Protestantism" of the 19th and early 20th centuries, for which the only true American was a Christian, and not a Christian alone but a Protestant, and not a Protestant alone but a special kind of Protestant—thus removing Jews threefold from the true America. Finally, Jewish religious worries were invoked: about a fundamentalist-literalist reading, uncomplicated by modern scholarship or the contemporary ethos, of the most anti-Jewish passages in the New Testament, and about a fundamentalist-literalist acceptance of a Christian's urgent duty to bring the Jews to Christ.

Not only to avoid antagonizing a possible next President of the United States but also to do their duty of being fair, leaders of the Jewish community warned it against being too hasty. Jews were not to assume that evangelicals are all alike, any more than Jews or Catholics. (In the primaries Carter did better with black voters than with white.) As to evangelical imperialism, it is a thing of the past. So far from trying to reconstitute an empire that is one with Nineveh and Tyre, many evangelicals nowadays would settle for inclusion in the accepted mix of American pluralism, from which they feel they have been disdainfully excluded. Above all, Israel is the elemental Jewish interest, and its Protestant friends are now likelier to be evangelical than mainstream and liberal.

None of this is wrong in itself, but it can be misleading. It suggests that only Jews were worried about Carter's religion, and only as Jews with consciously Jewish memories. It overlooks the people who sneered at Carter, or feared him, for being religious—not evangelical, or Southern Baptist, but religious simply. As with those who shudder at a Southern accent, so with those who shudder at religion. Some are not Jews, some are—and these apt to be unaware of themselves as Jews or to resent being thought of as Jews. The "official of the Kennedy Institute of Politics at Harvard" whom Richard Reeves celebrates (*New York* magazine, May 24) would seem not to be a Jew. He told Reeves: "I would never vote for anyone who believed in God." (Reeves comments: "The word usually used to describe attitudes like that is bigotry.")*

IT IS true that Jews can have a special set of perplexities about Carter's religion. In the Europe from which the parents or grandparents of most American Jews came, the regnant Christianity was not Protestant but Roman Catholic, in the Austro-Hungarian empire, or Eastern Orthodox, in the Russian one. Protestant was not *really* Christian. It was how a Jew had himself christened if he wanted family and friends to understand he was moved by ambition or expediency, not inward conversion. The young Sigmund Freud could think of baptism, briefly, but not to the Catholic church. Nor were the Jews alone in this. Around the turn of the century the Austrian philosopher and former Catholic priest Franz Brentano persuaded a number of his Jewish students, including Edmund Husserl, that a professorial chair was worth a baptism—but not to the real thing. The late Hugo Bergmann wrote that Brentano "advised his Jewish disciples to affiliate themselves with Protestantism, which he called, half jestingly and half respectfully, 'the religion of the irreligious.'" For most Jews here, only yesterday, the exemplary Christian was Cardinal Spellman. They could take their bearings by him. He did not get along with Eleanor Roosevelt.

When American Jews had risen in the world and moved to the suburbs, they could observe their new neighbors, Episcopalians and Congregationalists, staying away from their churches on Sunday almost as painlessly as the Jews stayed away on Saturday from the temples to which they now found themselves paying dues. Protestants and Jews were in perfect agreement that parochial

* One wonders why this official voted in 1960—as he must have done, if he were young enough—for his Institute's eponym, a Catholic believer. Either he has only since come to be unable to vote for anyone who believes in God or, more plausibly, he did not believe Kennedy was a believer, doing him the honor of believing he was a hypocrite instead.

On the other hand, maybe he did not literally mean what he said. Could he have meant, but not wanted to say, that he would never vote for a white Southerner? If the white Southerner were also from the wrong sector of the Democratic party, and additionally believed in God, those would be further reasons for rejecting him. Would this official never vote for Father Drinan, the Congressman, or William Sloane Coffin? Would he not have voted for Martin Luther King, or Reinhold Niebuhr?

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schools were bad. (Would religious Christians think Christian parochial schools were bad? Religious Jews do not think Jewish parochial schools are bad.) In short, what many American Jews thought they knew about Protestants did not differ greatly from what Brentano had thought he knew.

Last year a young Canadian told me of his bafflement when, after twelve years of education in Jewish day schools, he entered the University of Toronto and found himself for the first time in the company of schoolmates who were not Jews. Ontario being mainly Scottish, its Christianity is mainly Protestant and its Protestantism mainly Presbyterian. This Jewish student knew what it was to live a Jewish life. A Jew was supposed to eat kosher food. A Jew was supposed to keep the Sabbath—not riding, not carrying money, not striking a match. A Jew was supposed to pray three times daily, wearing *tefillin* on weekday mornings. And so on. The student tried to picture what it was to live a Presbyterian life, and failed. At last he had to ask one of his new friends, "What does a Presbyterian do?"

Not so long ago Jews knew what a Catholic did. A Catholic abstained from meat on Friday, wore a St. Christopher's medal, went to Mass. Today Catholics do not seem to be doing many Catholic things any more. Having been taught no longer to abstain from meat on Friday or venerate Christopher, many have also learned no longer to go to church.

Evangelicals and fundamentalists still go to church, and there are more of them every year. Their most influential clergyman is Billy Graham, a strong friend to Israel when earlier friends have departed. But the friendship embarrasses many American Jews. He is not regarded as liberal. On the intellectual side, the luminaries of Harvard Divinity and Chicago wrinkle their noses when his name is mentioned. All in all, for people who respect the liberal and the academic he is only dubiously respectable.

AT THAT, Graham is infinitely more respectable than George Wallace, who in 1974 got two-thirds of the votes in the Democratic primary for governor of Alabama. That was striking but not surprising. What was surprising was the proportion of black votes Wallace got. At first the estimate was between 20 and 25 per cent, but later the chairman of the black caucus of the state Democratic party said the black Wallace vote could have been only 15 per cent at most. (The Wallace share of the Alabama Jewish vote remained negligible.) He had become less of an enemy and more of a friend to blacks, so they increased their vote for him. That is standard American voting behavior: punish enemies while encouraging them to change, and reward friends. The black voters of Alabama made no exception even for a Wallace.

Jews tend to feel guilty about such rewards and punishments. To judge from the way in which many Jews behave, the truly moral and fitting thing is to encourage friends to change. Governor Reagan was not a Wallace and was a friend to Israel. He once had to cross a Jewish picket line to get a citation at an Israel Bonds banquet.

Jews like to go counter to interest in other ways as well. Some months ago I was at a Jewish meeting where nobody present was eligible for food stamps. One of the chief speakers was a Senator still yearning for higher things. He gave a rousing speech in favor of redistributing incomes, and he got rousing applause. Afterward somebody told me how courageous he thought the Senator was, telling the rich he was for soaking the rich. I thought how smart he was, understanding that prosperous Jews are seldom so happy as when asked to pass a resolution to share the wealth.

This brings us to the matter of conservatism. The pollsters say more Americans call themselves conservative than liberal. In New York State the Conservative party is younger than the Liberal party but gets more votes. The Liberal party is heavily Jewish. Ask the average member of a Conservative synagogue whether he is conservative, and he may feel insulted. For Jews "conservative" can be not so much a description as a reproach. Expectably, they were reproached most, and reproached themselves, in presidential 1972. Because 1976 has been more centrist, less split between Left and Right, there has been less talk of Jewish selfish conservatism. Normally it is Jews who talk of it, but the only talk worth mentioning so far this year has been by a black man, the political scientist Martin Kilson of Harvard (*American Scholar*, Summer 1976).

Professor Kilson finds the Jews of New York guilty of a rampant conservative trend, and Jewish intellectuals guilty of something apparently even more disgusting, neoconservatism—witness the regrettable Nathan Glazer of *Affirmative Discrimination*.

Having paid his respects to the Jews, Kilson goes on to note that

> in presidential elections since 1960—save the 1964 election—the white popular vote has favored the Republican party, the party least likely to initiate public policy innovations beneficial to the needs of Negro Americans. Negroes, on the other hand, have voted overwhelmingly for the Democrats in this period—by no less than 71 per cent and by as much as 87 per cent.

He thinks it unnecessary to record that in those years, when he himself tells us the Democratic percentage of all white voters was under 50 in three of four elections, the turncoat Jews' Democratic range was from something like 65 to 90 per cent.

Kilson leaves no room for doubt: Democrats are good for the Negroes and Republicans bad. What else can that mean but that Negroes should con-

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tinue to vote for the Democrats and against the Republicans? For Kilson it can mean this:

> . . . the issue at the top of the political agenda for blacks is that of deploying black votes more carefully between the Democratic and Republican parties. The United States appears to be in an era of keenly contested presidential elections, tight races whose outcome figures to be close, with neither party likely to hold the White House for more than two consecutive terms. In this situation blacks cannot afford to nestle too comfortably in the embrace of one party (the Democratic) to the exclusion of the other (the Republican).

If Kilson were a Jew talking to Jews, he could not get away with advising them to deploy their votes more carefully between the Democrats and the Republicans. He could scarcely get away with advising them to deploy their votes more carefully between the Left of the Democratic party and its center. It would be his turn to be called rampantly conservative, or maybe even neoconservative.

The charge of Jewish selfish conservativism (JSC) is far from new. Between fifteen and twenty years ago a nice little intellectual-academic industry was established—manufacturing and retailing JSC. I used to think it was like the garment industry, since there too the manufacturers and retailers are largely Jewish, but I was wrong. It is more like the halvah industry, where not only the manufacturers and retailers but also the buyers and consumers are largely Jewish, and which deals in an oily commodity that exists to feed a habit. Eating halvah is dangerous to your dental health, and swallowing JSC is dangerous to your mental health. The danger to dental health must scare Jews more, though, because halvah production and consumption are down while JSC production and consumption are up.

Not that Jews are the only target of the selfish-conservatism industry. Its most popular item goes like this: if you have defended rationality and intellect against irrationalist and anti-intellectual aggression, you have done well, but if you keep on you are selfish and conservative. If you say that the Soviet Union is an abomination you are right, but if you argue for resisting the expansion of Soviet power you are selfish and conservative. You may, if you are a Jew, stand up for the Jews—their reputation, needs, and very existence—but when you actually do so you are selfish and conservative. Purveyors of this line and the allied JSC one are big in Cambridge and Beverly Hills, which may help to assuage the pain they suffer when they must sternly deplore Canarsie and Forest Hills.

THE election of 1972 showed that for Jews the so-called Jewish issues were secondary, and more important negatively than positively. Jews would not vote for a candidate who was against Israel, but neither would they vote for him just because he said he was for Israel. They would not vote for a candidate who was for quotas, but neither would they vote for him just because he said he was against quotas. What negative issue will there be in 1976? That the Democrat is an evangelical? In 1960 Jews were able to vote for the Democrat who was Joe Kennedy's son.

Analyzing the successive 1973 Democratic mayoral primaries in New York City, William Schneider and his students—who are not to be held responsible for what Kilson made of their data—concluded that among Jewish voters the difference was less between conservatives and liberals, since few Jews called themselves conservative, than between those who liked moderation and those who liked confrontation, division, conflict. I think moderation is a Jewish interest. It is in that sense that most New York Jews voted for a Jewish interest.

Carter is the moderate in 1976. Prejudice against a Southerner can evaporate as quickly as other prejudices which only yesterday were taken to be frozen solid. Carter need not worry very much about his Jewish vote. I hope Jewish voters need not worry very much about him.

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The English Sickness: A Touch of Class?

P.T. Bauer

Class is the leitmotif or even the exclusive theme of much critical comment about Britain. The class system is blamed for just about any form of British economic adversity or social malaise, from balance-of-payments difficulties, inflation, and unemployment to industrial disputes and the troubles of the National Health Service—all those diverse phenomena which have come to be known collectively as "the English sickness." Thus Helmut Schmidt, the West German Chancellor, said in an interview reported in the London *Financial Times* recently that "as long as you maintain the damned class-ridden society of yours, you will never get out of your mess," and the *Financial Times* reporter commented:

> The single most important fault in Britain's social structure remains its propensity to accentuate class differences. . . . Most foreigners can see this, but many people in Britain are curiously blind to the grim reality behind the Chancellor's words.

The "many people in Britain" referred to here certainly do not include the British intelligentsia which is, if anything, obsessed with class and by whom foreigners like Herr Schmidt are influenced. For while British society may or may not be sick, the preoccupation of British intellectuals with class is certainly morbid. Nor is this preoccupation restricted to intellectuals of the Left. In the January 1976 issue of *Encounter* there are two articles on "the English sickness," both by Conservative journalists (Henry Fairlie and Peregrine Worsthorne), and both full of interesting things. But when it comes to the social and economic implications of the class system, both Mr. Fairlie and (to a lesser degree) Mr. Worsthorne accept and rehash the familiar stereotype about its restrictive character in suppressing talent and obstructing the advance of the "underprivileged."

One of the reasons that British intellectuals are so obsessed with class is that, being English-speaking, they are apt to compare Britain with America (which on the surface at any rate is more open than British society), rather than with other European countries in which class divisions have usually been more rigid, and which in any case they know much less well.

But the long and relatively peaceful continuity of British history and society is probably a more important factor in explaining why Britain seems more class-bound to the intellectuals than other European countries. There have been no violent revolutions in Britain since the civil war of the 17th century (which was much less savage or far-reaching than the Thirty Years' War, the French Revolution, the American Civil War, or the Paris Commune). Thus there were no wholesale executions or large-scale expropriations of the aristocracy or of the rich. The absence of such violent change has suggested an impregnable and static ruling class—an impression reinforced by the unobtrusive ease with which new men rose in the social scale and became indistinguishable from their former social superiors. In fact, the very open and mobile character of British as compared with Continental society has in itself paradoxically encouraged a misleading conception of the role of class in England.

An acute (almost Proustian) awareness of small or even minuscule distinctions has always been widespread in British society. The difference between a CB (Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath) and a CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) is to this day recognized throughout the civil service and often beyond it. A civil servant used to be—and perhaps still is—upset or even mortified if he received only a CBE when he expected to receive a CB; and similarly if he expected a CBE but had to be content with an OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire).*

Perception of differences also extends far down the social scale. Working-class pubs still habitually have different compartments or rooms, such as saloon bars, lounge bars, and public bars, frequented by slightly different groups from within the same area.

Many distinctions or nuances in such matters as education, dress, speech, clothes, and membership in clubs are related to social standing and class. These distinctions have traditionally been accepted in the sense that persons favored by them were—and often still are—widely respected or even admired; and the ability to discern them was—and sometimes still is—both expected and respected.

Although Britain has indeed

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* There are further refinements in that the prestige of the military division of those orders differs from that of the civil division. A military OBE is more highly esteemed than a civil OBE.

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been a "class" society in this sense, however, it has never been a closed, much less a caste, society—that is, one in which occupation is determined by the hereditary class into which a person is born. There was never a closed aristocracy or nobility. Very large numbers of people could secure entry into the upper classes through marriage, money, service, or official favor. Entry even into the highest ranks of the aristocracy was possible by such means. And no significant branch of industry or commerce was restricted to membership of a particular class, which is especially pertinent in the context of economic achievement and material progress.

EVIDENCE relating to such matters is almost entirely neglected by those who complain about the effects of class on British society. No one reading the standard pieces on class in Britain, for example, would imagine that people like Disraeli, whose Jewish origin was announced in his very name, or Lloyd George, a very poor Welsh orphan brought up by an uncle who was a shoemaker, or Ramsay MacDonald, illegitimate son of a fisherwoman, could all have become prime minister of England. None of these men had been to university: Lloyd George and MacDonald had simple education only, and Disraeli attended a relatively unknown secondary school.

Nor would anyone reading most of the contemporary critical comment on the role of class in British economic life ever guess that, whatever the shortcomings of British industry, it is being managed, and has been managed for decades or more, by new men, even by very new men. This is evident in the auto, food-processing, electrical, chemical, mass-retailing, mass-entertainment, building, real-estate, and plantation industries. But it applies in large measure also to steel, transport, engineering, ship-building, and the mass-circulation newspapers.

It should be clear, for instance, that the inadequacies and traumas of the British auto industry cannot be attributed to class, as that industry has always been in the hands of new men or of American companies. Lord Nuffield, who had very little education and began as a bicycle repairer, was the leading figure in the auto industry in the interwar period. He made an immense fortune, part of which he used to found an Oxford college.

Or take Unilever. This grew out of a business started in the closing years of the 19th century by a Lancashire grocer who made his own soap. For many years the founder's successors as chairman and chief executive have come from middle-class or working-class origins. Thus from 1960 to 1970 the chairman and chief executive was Lord Cole, son of a clerk. Cole had a very modest education and started to work for the company at the age of seventeen. On retiring from Unilever, he became government-appointed chairman of Rolls Royce. His son went to Eton, then to Oxford.

In mass retailing or catering, the prominence of new men like Sir Isaac Wolfson, Sir Charles Clore, or Sir Jack Cohen is familiar; that of the Sieffs, Marks, Salmons, and Glucksteins (Marks & Spencer, and Lyons) dates from a few decades back. Less familiar are the names of Sir John Hay (1883-1964), undisputed leader of the British rubber industry of the interwar and early postwar years; Sir John Ellerman, Baronet (1862-1933), founder of the Ellerman shipping line, who at the time of his death was possibly the richest man in England; the first Lord Catto (1879-1959), chairman of Yule Catto, director of Morgan Grenfell, and finally governor of the Bank of England. All three came from poor families and started their business careers in very modest jobs.

The civil service is often said to have been the exclusive preserve of the upper- and upper-middle classes before World War II. But Josiah Charles, first Lord Stamp of Shortlands (1880-1940), GCB (Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath), GBE (Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), began as a clerk in the Inland Revenue in 1896. He reached a high position before retiring young, moved into industry, and subsequently became a director of the Bank of England and chairman of the largest British railway company. The late Sir John Anderson, first Viscount Waverley (1882-1958), GCB, GCSI (Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the Star of India), GCIE (Knight Grand Cross of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire), Governor of Bengal, and Home Secretary, was also a career civil servant with a middle-class background.

Similarly with Oxford and Cambridge, which are also often said to have been closed to the lower classes. Yet for many years past some of the highest and most coveted positions in the two universities have been held by new men, including several who did not go to college there, and who were of very modest background. For instance, the late Sir James Chadwick, Nobel Prize physicist, Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge for most of the interwar period, and its Master from 1948, was the son of an unskilled worker.

Class domination of the British army before World War II is often thought so self-evident as not to be worth discussing. But for most of World War I the Chief of the Imperial General Staff was Sir William Robertson (1860-1933), GCVO (Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order), GCB, GCMG (Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George). Robertson was a man of humble birth who enlisted as a private in the 1880's and finally rose to the rank of field marshal.

Even the pre-1939 diplomatic service was not closed to people of humble origin. Sir Reader Bullard (1885-1976) was the son of an extremely poor casual laborer. He entered the consular service before World War I, having laregly educated himself, and rose to become ambassador to Iran at a crucial time. In the course of his ascent, he married a daughter of a celebrated Master of Balliol College, Oxford.

THESE EXAMPLES are by no means exceptional or freakish. Indeed, prominent writers and scholars for well over a century have recognized

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the extensive social mobility in Britain, and especially in British economic life. Tocqueville commented on the ease of entry into the British aristocracy in the 19th century, and the rise of new men in society and in business has often been written about and documented since then. Seymour Martin Lipset and Reinhard Bendix cite a study published in 1912 with the noteworthy title, *The Recruiting of the Employing Classes from the Ranks of the Wage Earners in the Cotton Industry,* according to which

> over two-thirds of owners, directors, and managers in the cotton industry had begun their careers either as manual workers or in low-status clerical positions. The researchers, surprised by their own findings, attempted to check them by interviewing company executives, union leaders, and economic historians of the industry. They found general agreement with their findings. Sidney Webb, the Fabian leader, commented, "In Lancashire I think that practically all mill managers are taken from the ranks of the Spinners' Union . . . ." The spread of technical education and the improvement of general education have greatly stimulated the vertical mobility of the population. As the century has advanced, the need for education, general, technical, and commercial, has become more specialized and intricate. In all the principal centers of the cotton industry in Lancashire we found a vigorous interest taken in technical education. Generally speaking, the ablest of the young wage earners attend in the evening at technical classes. . . . Of the best students an appreciable number rise to positions as managers or independent employers in industry.

These findings are of special interest on two grounds. First, the British cotton industry at the time was a relatively old industry so that the large proportion of new men is *prima facie* surprising. Second, the British cotton industry has lost out to its competitors heavily since World War I, which suggests that Britain's industrial decline has nothing to do with the class system.

There are many other academic studies which substantiate the high degree of social mobility in Britain, often by authors critical of British politics and society but who are nevertheless prepared to recognize the force of the evidence on this point.* The conclusions are epitomized in a recent article in the *Daily Telegraph* by Professor Donald G. Macrae of the University of London:

> We have never, since Elizabethan times, had serious legal barriers to moving up or down social ladders, never had a closed nobility of the European kind. Our statistics, which on this matter take us back with some doubts to the early 20th century, suggest a high and constant rate of mobility equal to that of the United States and greater than in Western Europe.

Professor Macrae's observations were not challenged. Indeed, a subsequent article in the same newspaper referred to "the turbulent chaos of British social life, in which about two people in every five end up in a social class different from that occupied by their parents." On this point, a recent letter to the editor of the London *Observer* is worth quoting in full:

> I was interested in your questionnaire on TV and had intended to complete it, until I noticed the usual horrid little box at the end, asking me to state my "class." According to the sociologists, I have two middle-class sisters and one working-class. I have one middle-class and one working-class daughter. My son-in-law was middle-class until the age of 23, then became working-class for three years. He is now middle-class again. From now on I refuse to fill in any questionnaire which perpetuates such absurdity.

In British economic life, at any rate, all this goes back many centuries. The expression "new rich" seems to have been used in England as early as the 15th century, and by the early 18th century the essayist Addison could write:

> A superior capacity for business, and a more extensive knowledge, are steps by which a new man often mounts to favor, and outshines the rest of his contemporaries.

Addison might almost have been anticipating the question asked by Lady Bracknell more than a century later in *The Importance of Being Earnest*: "Was he born in what the radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?"

Such new men included members of minority groups as well as members of the lower class. Thus while politics and the universities were restricted to members of the Church of England until the 19th century, Huguenots and Nonconformists, especially the latter, nevertheless played a massive role from the 17th century on in the development of British industry and commerce (particularly banking, brewing, engineering, and textiles); and they were followed in the 19th and 20th centuries by Jews.

The restrictive character of the English educational system, supposedly originating in class bias (but actually rooted in religious bias), is often blamed for the economic and social problems of the country. However, the barring of Catholics (including members of the nobility), Jews, and Nonconformists from Oxford and Cambridge did not preclude rapid British economic progress in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was a progress promoted and propelled, moreover, largely by people with little formal education (a familiar phenomenon by no means confined to Britain, which is inadequately acknowledged by academics and educationalists). In addition, neither the privileges of Oxford and Cambridge nor the prestige of the public schools enabled these institutions to stop other groups from setting up academies and schools, which indeed they often did. Again, the educational system in Scotland was quite different from that in England. There were old universities in Scotland, and these were not restricted to members of the Church of England, nor controlled

* Examples include D.V. Glass (editor), *Social Mobility in Britain*, London, 1954; John Westergaard, *Class In Capitalist Society*, London, 1975.

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by it, and the school system there was more extensive than in England. Yet Scotland did not outdistance England either in economic performance or in industrial relations.

CHANGE IN the relative position of societies and countries is not abnormal; it is a commonplace of history. Presumably the British decline, like that of other societies in the past, has resulted from a complex interaction of cultural, political, and economic factors combined with external forces, all operating with different and varying time lags. No one knows the relative significance of these influences or their modes of interaction. Moreover, in this context it is often difficult to disentangle causes, effects, and symptoms. Yet the evidence certainly does not point to class as the overriding factor.

Indeed, one could make a case for the proposition that the British decline, far from being the product of an old and persistent class system, has been accelerated by the imposition of *new* restrictions on openness and mobility quite foreign to the system of the past. Thus, as a result of the nationalization of many activities, widespread licensing, far-reaching bureaucratization, and very heavy taxation, the establishment and development of many businesses from small beginnings has become much more difficult in recent years than it used to be. Rent ceilings, trade-union restrictions, minimum wages, and closed shops also reduce mobility, both directly and by making it more difficult to start new businesses. These measures obstruct or even preclude the rise of large numbers of people from poverty to prosperity by means of legitimate business activity. Such progress of people with modest background is now largely confined to those who can advance through the state or corporate bureaucracy or to the small number who can do so in the free professions.

Even journalism is becoming less open to talented and enterprising members of the working class. From the early 19th century until recently, journalism presented an excellent opportunity of advancement for talented people of working-class background and with little formal education. Some of the great figures of 19th- and early 20th-century British journalism came from modest backgrounds, and had little formal education. Compulsory unionization and the widespread insistence on formal qualifications have made such careers less likely.

The prospects of social and economic advance of many working-class children have also been affected adversely by the suppression of many schools catering to the needs of talented working-class children, and the replacement of these schools by institutions intended to serve as social-engineering laboratories rather than as educational institutions.

But these, of course, are not the complaints of those critics who attribute the "English sickness" to a restrictive class system.

Professing English

Joseph Epstein

FOR the past three years at a large Midwestern university I have taught a course entitled "Advanced Prose Composition." Although the general intelligence of the students has not varied greatly —out of a class of fifteen, I can depend upon four good talkers, two proficient writers, two whose work is beyond repair, and the remainder lurking in the gray middle-ground—the course has nonetheless changed, each year becoming more rudimentary. Creativity, expressiveness, spontaneity have tended increasingly to be played down; usage, modes of argument, a close inspection of the deceptive uses of language have tended increasingly to be played up. The aim of the course, which is never successfully met, is the one the Viennese journalist Karl Kraus set for his own writing: "My language is the universal whore whom I have to make into a virgin."

In this course formal rules are not ignored. Take, for example, the split infinitive, a small point, yet one about which students in a course called Advanced Prose Composition ought at least to know. Usually it turns out that they do not know about it—a piece of ignorance abetted by the fact that most do not know what an infinitive is. After explaining what an infinitive is, and thence how it is split, I take the line advocated by H.W. Fowler: that where possible it is best to avoid splitting an infinitive, but that it is better to lapse into the error than to write a sentence that reads awkwardly. I then ask, what are the consequences that follow from ignoring this rule? Silence. The chief consequence, I announce, is that one risks offending the educated. Edgy laughter. Am I, students wonder, putting them on? I am not; I am in earnest.

I am in earnest because, while I do not think that the split infinitive is a life-and-death matter, I do think that a respect for the traditional rules of prose composition is worth cultivating, and that the educated are worth not offending. The educated are, after all, a sensitive minority group—even, some would say, an endangered species—and on these grounds alone their opinions would therefore

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seem deserving of respect. Besides, a lack of respect for rules, standards, and the formal aspects of prose composition is available in amplitude elsewhere: grade schools, high schools, the best universities. Mine is, I recognize, an unabashedly elitist view, but elitism seems to me eminently defensible in questions having to do with prose style and with culture in the capital-C sense.

Elitism has, of course, become a buzz word in the contemporary lexicon, carrying associated meanings of "anti-democratic," reactionary," "self-serving," and even "racist." Queried in class about the meaning of an aphorism by Pascal —"The more intelligent a man is, the more originality he discovers in men. Ordinary people see no difference among men"—a bright student, a young woman who is white, Jewish, and an editorialist for the school newspaper, remarks that the aphorism is elitist, and thus by definition not merely untrue but not nice. Elitism does not get a very good press, either within or outside the classroom.

All the more interesting, therefore, that Richard Ohmann, in *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession,** should insist over and over again that the teaching of college English is work at the service of the elite in America, and hence class-ridden, capitalist, and imperialist. *English in America* is a roundhouse attack on a profession through whose ranks its author has himself most splendidly risen. Richard Ohmann is professor of English at Wesleyan University, editor of the journal *College English,* and author of a textbook on exposition now in its third edition. I mention these biographical items not to hold Ohmann's success against him but to make clear that there can be nothing of the envy of the failed professor behind his attack. Not sour grapes but political juices lubricate Ohmann's argument. His politics are what by now can be described as old New Left; Ohmann would not, I think, disavow the banner, but carries it proudly. Socialism is the name of his desire, and if this desire is to be made flesh, universities, and English professors in particular, need "to act as allies of the socialist revolution."

SUCH are Ohmann's conclusions, but across what premises does he march to arrive at them? His argument, in a single sentence, is that the main function of English departments "has been neither the making of a counterculture nor the laying on of primary culture, but producing and passing on our share of knowledge that has value to the technostructure." According to a historical chapter contributed to this book by Wallace Douglas, things began to go wrong for English studies not long after the establishment of the Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric at Harvard (in 1803), when rhetoric, heretofore concerned entirely with oratory, began to be applied to the study of composition. Edward Tyrell Channing, who held the Boylston Chair from 1819 to 1851, declared that writing "will prepare us in a degree for active life, by giving us habits of self-denial, industry, and close study, a general and ready command of our faculties, a clear, direct way of thinking on all subjects and occasions, a promptness and decision in our opinions, and a natural and precise method of expressing them." Channing was followed by Charles Norton Eliot, who, as president of Harvard, did not have trouble getting the word elite past his lips; in his famous inaugural address and elsewhere, Eliot argued that part of the task of the university was to meet the "wants of the American community" (as well as "to serve the nation by training men to intellectual honesty and independence of mind"). One of the ways the university would meet those wants would be through the teaching of composition, which would imbue the virtues that Edward Tyrell Channing had claimed for it.

In this reading, an unwritten contract of sorts was struck between professors of English and society at large, or, if one prefers, society's elites. Under the terms of this contract the professors would teach composition, especially freshman composition, so that university graduates could carry on the work of business and industry; in exchange the professors could tend to their own imaginary gardens, the academic scholarship involved in literary study: editing texts, teaching courses in pure literary subjects, writing literary history and criticism. But the English professors bargained in bad faith, for while they agreed to take on society's work of teaching composition—instruction, in effect, in proper desk manners, the industrial equivalent of proper table manners —their hearts were really in literary scholarship. Certainly it was, and has remained, through scholarship, through publication, that the most prestigious departments earned their reputations and that the best jobs were won. (A definition of a good teaching job is, of course, that one doesn't have to do much teaching.) Ohmann approvingly quotes a professor from Carleton College as saying: "We always describe ourselves as adventurers on the frontier of knowledge, but I think we're schoolteachers."

An interesting issue might be argued around that remark, which occurs in Ohmann's chapter on the Modern Language Association, but it does not much interest him. The brunt of his complaint against the MLA, for example, is that it is insufficiently political—or, more precisely, that it insufficiently shares his politics. "Has the MLA pursued a single political course at all consistently?" he asks. "Mostly, it has pursued the politics of neutrality and guild interest, which means, basically, maintaining the status quo." To the question of why the MLA should be anything other than a nice boring organization seeking its own special interests, Ohmann answers that literature is inherently revolutionary, and the literature English professors see it as their job to preserve "includes works by Milton, Voltaire, Rousseau, Swift, Goethe, Byron, Blake, Shelley, Carlyle, Shaw, and others of that rebellious ilk." One could counter that that same literature which English professors are to preserve includes works by Dostoevsky, Conrad, Henry Adams, Orwell, Mann, Eliot, Solzhenitsyn, and

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others of that distrustful-of-the-rebellious ilk (or rebellious-not-in-Ohmann's-sense), but it would probably be to little avail. For if the socialist revolution is Ohmann's notion of heaven, the status quo is his notion of hell. His attack on the MLA, on the now no-longer much in vogue New Criticism, on teaching practice, on composition textbooks, all comes down to this: "I used to wonder," he writes, "why it is that society pays English teachers so much money to do what by and large is fun: teaching fine literature. I now think that our function is extremely valuable: namely, to insure the harmlessness of all culture; to make it serve and preserve the status quo."

How do English departments go about serving the status quo? In manifold ways, subtle and devious, but chiefly through the teaching of freshman composition. "English 101 and the Military-Industrial Complex" Ohmann entitles the section of his book on the subject, in which, through a sampling of fourteen recent freshman-composition textbooks, he sets out to demonstrate how the teaching of freshman composition inculcates the bourgeois cast of mind. If, as Ohmann might put it, one does not possess a "consciousness" close to his, reading these chapters turns out to be a somewhat mystifying experience. For the bourgeois cast of mind that he so deplores is one given to orderliness, a regard for complexity and efficiency, and a concern for style, and is "prophylactically sealed in an environment of disinterestedness." Nice work if you can get it; just try getting it from most undergraduates.

Little is clear about the methods Ohmann himself would employ to teach composition. He remarks that "argument divorced from power, money, social conflict, class, and consciousness is pseudo-argument." He holds that, to escape criticism, each book used in freshman composition should have "a clear social aim, with a twofold job of raising social and rhetorical awareness (theory) and teaching composition as social and political practice, seeing the English classroom and the university as arenas of struggle." Again: "Students [should] develop their writing skills in the process of discovering their political needs, and as an aid in achieving those needs."

Although Ohmann is a harsh critic of the language of his enemies—and as with most radicals of his temper, his greatest enmity is reserved for liberals—his own language tends to be galvanized by buzz words: alienation, multinational corporations, Rockefeller-Morgan banks, technology, liberation, the technostructure. Reading him on American society is rather like hearing a nostalgia recording from the last decade; every tune from the radical songbook is included. "The wise only possess ideas," Coleridge wrote, "the greater part of mankind are possessed by them." Ohmann is a man possessed, but not by very interesting ideas. His social criticism is a thin soup laced with lumps from the works of Lewis Mumford and a few dry bones from the thought of John Kenneth Galbraith. After "the admirable years 1967 and 1968," as Ohmann likes to describe them, it is no longer possible to swallow such stuff.

But assume for a moment that Ohmann is roughly correct when he writes that "an educational system is responsive to the personal needs of an economic system; and, less concretely, that the educational system will support the tacit ideas of the dominant groups in society." If this is so, why, then, is the teaching of composition today largely so ineffective—so *un*responsive to the personal needs of the economic system? Why, to put it another way, are the colleges and universities not turning out better and more polished capitalists?

If English departments took their duty to capitalist society seriously they would be deploying their best talent to the teaching of composition, or at least making a pretense of doing so, which at present they decidedly do not. English composition, where it is still taught (and at many schools it is no longer a required subject at all), is usually taught by graduate students or young assistant professors, as Ohmann himself concedes. Composition is generally considered grub work, best left to underlings (which leaves to senior men the right to complain of how poorly undergraduates write). But this is only part of the story. A more important factor is the positive hostility of English departments—and in this they take their lead from much of modern literature itself—to capitalism in general and businessmen in particular. Still another part of the story has to do with the current demoralization of English departments in America, a demoralization that, I believe, is endemic and runs deep.

Once upon a time, and not so long ago at that, one could say that American English departments either bred, or provided a home for, some of the most interesting minds in the country. Yvor Winters, Lionel Trilling, Perry Miller are but a few of the names of men who, beginning with literature as their subject, came to take all of society as their intellectual province. As they have died, they have not been replaced, nor do they soon seem likely to be. The bright young men who were supposed to be coming along appear to have been sidetracked; brightness has not ripened into mature intelligence, and they are no longer so young. Steven Marcus and Frederick Crews, to take but two names that come to mind, both took a leftward turn during the last decade, Marcus toward the working class of Friedrich Engels's Manchester, Crews up the dank alley of psychoanalysis, both to produce books of extravagant pretensions and quite disappointing results.

But a particular professor's politics is not the problem; it is rather the very turning to politics, and to a commonplace politics at that, which is symptomatic of a loss of confidence in literary culture, an impatience with its complexity and, to use the abhorrent phrase, its lack of relevance. Ohmann's *English in America* shows the disease in full growth, and thus is useful for laboratory purposes (if for nothing else), but in less extreme form one finds the same loss of confidence in literary studies everywhere.

To make his case for what he claims to be the inherent conserva-

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tism of English studies, Ohmann cites the New Criticism, which, he argues, had an apolitical or conservative bias. The New Criticism did indeed have such a bias, but that was scarcely what recommended it to professors of English. What did, I think, was that it was eminently teachable: it required no historical knowledge in students, no feeling for psychology, or the contradictoriness of experience. But the New Criticism is not much taught any longer; certainly it cannot any longer be said that it is dominant. It is difficult to say what today is dominant, for the scene in English studies at present is rather like T.S. Eliot's "Sunday park of contending and contentious orators": the misreaders following Harold Bloom and Geoffrey Hartman at Yale; the Frenchifiers after Roland Barthes; the "paracriticism" of Ihab Hassan; the elegant indeterminacy of Frank Kermode; a bit of Freudianism; a bit of Marxism. Not least populous among the Sunday orators are the Wastelanders, those who teach the catechism of the modernists, with its message that the game is up.

English departments have also gone in, in rather a big way, for entertainment. The science-fiction course has become a staple, and one of the most popular, at many large universities. Then there is literature-and-film, which also draws crowds of students. Creative writing is yet another item on the bill of fare; and even though it is by now a commonplace that creative writing cannot be taught, no university English department with pretensions to being with-it would dare to be without at least one such course. For the same reason that these kinds of courses make up part of the smorgasbord of English studies, standards generally have been lowered. The reason is the fear of a loss of students, with the consequences that this carries in reduced emoluments. English departments have become competitive within the university, panting after higher enrollments, and in the process English studies have become demeaned.

At most universities, then, the English major nowadays gets a few fast survey courses in the history of English and American literature, a handful of unrelated courses with Sunday orators, a few antinomian notions, and a large helping of entertainment. The English major might run up against a first-class teacher, a fine mind enraptured by his subject and adept at conveying its seriousness, but there is no guarantee of this—no guarantee that such a teacher will be found in English rather than in history or philosophy or physics.

What is the alternative? The alternative is literary culture, and the point of view that literature confers. How this might be brought about is in large part a curricular question, the answers to which would perforce have to be carefully detailed, though F. R. Leavis's 1967 Clark Lectures, *English Literature in Our Time and The University*, provides an excellent place to begin the search. Standards would have to be invoked. ("We talk about 'standards,'" Leavis remarks, ". . . at times when it is precisely hard to invoke standards with effect.") The dross—chiefly the entertainment features and creative writing—would have to be stripped away. Enrollments, for a while at least, would probably drop. But to go on with things as they are now tending is to insure that English departments end up becoming little more than culture boutiques, if they are not already that now.

Literary culture means not only our sense of the literature of the past, but all this implies in the heritage of experience, ideas, and the creative strength of language. The literature of the future is also at stake. While it is not the proper responsibility of university English departments to turn out novelists, poets, and playwrights, the way novels, poems, and plays are talked about in universities does importantly influence literary production. If proof of this is needed, one can point to an already sizable body of fiction that has come into being under the aegis of the new American English teaching, much of it in fact written by young professors and teachers of creative writing. Post-modernist by name, it is by method often technically ingenious, but its ingenuity is at the service of an unearned nihilism and of academically fashionable ideas devoid of experience.

The point of view that literary study confers is enmeshed with the nature of literary knowledge itself, which is accumulative, incremental, acquired by accretion, and never ending. It is in the nature of literary study to be, if not non-systematic, then distrustful of all systems that make a pretense of explaining human conduct. This distrust derives from wide reading of the great authors, who cumulatively teach that human experience is more various than any single system can hope to comprehend. ("Never say you know the last word about any human heart," wrote Henry James.) Not that literary study cannot avail itself of existing systems of thought—Freudian, Jungian, Marxist, structuralist, etc.—where they are appropriate; but final loyalty is (or ought to be) to the work. In literature the concrete is more to be trusted than the abstract.

Perhaps more than any other discipline, literary study, pursued at its higher reaches, entails a comprehensive study of society itself, which means knowledge of history, psychology, moral philosophy, and politics. Temptations lie in this path, to be sure, and not the least of them is politics. Politics can ruin literary work in a way that it cannot ruin, for example, scientific work. And literary men in the role of political activists have been notoriously a disaster, with a few honorable exceptions. There is something about too great an immersion in literature—a tendency toward self-dramatization, possibly—that has forced many a literary man into political hysteria (the radical group that came to leadership in the MLA in the late 1960's had as one of the planks in its platform to end the repression of American writers!). Yet this need not always be so. Lionel Trilling was never better than in *The Liberal Imagination*, a book devoted to questioning the ideas of the very liberalism to which he felt himself allied. Yvor Winters, though an early member of the NAACP and of a

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leftist political disposition generally, never allowed his politics to invade his criticism, and adhered all his life to conservative literary principles. Philip Rahv, a Marxist, was powerfully attracted to Dostoevsky—a writer who, it is fair to say, above all others would have despised Rahv's politics.

It might well be argued that other disciplines besides literary studies are similarly cut loose from their moorings and adrift in strange seas—that, in short, the Sunday park is filled with orators. That may be true enough, but it only makes the deliquescence of literary study all the more alarming. The social sciences, for example, by and large run as disorderly a house as do English departments, but there is the difference that the social sciences have the tacit support of society (owing to the belief, however erroneous, that social science is in some rough way doing the work of society). But why should society wish to support English? Who needs another boutique?

Support is, however, a side issue; society has after all supported much that is frivolous and even more that is deleterious to its own interests. More to the point, without literary studies the English language in America has no guardian. English departments may themselves have been less than diligent in their responsibilities to the language in recent years, but the fact is that no other group in the modern American university has *any* declared interest in the way English is used.

Which brings me back to the split infinitive. In alerting students to its existence in the world I suppose I can be accused of wishing to train good capitalists. The split infinitive, questions of usage, the study of prose rhythm and of the principles of argument, none of this, it is true, is going to bring about the socialist revolution—an event I, for one, await with no impatience. What it does do is to give students and their teachers a feeling of beginning afresh, an opening into all the possibilities of human expression that the last twenty years in English studies have done so much to destroy.

Fiction

Barthelme's Comedy of Patricide

Hilton Kramer

"Holy hell," I said. "Is there to be no end to this *family life*?"
—Donald Barthelme,
"Critique de la Vie Quotidienne"

That is a tall tale, said the Dead Father. I don't believe it ever happened.

No tale ever happened in the way we tell it, said Thomas, but the moral is always correct.

What is the moral?

Murderinging, Thomas said.
—Donald Barthelme,
The Dead Father

FATHERHOOD, as we have lately been reminded by Martin Green in *Children of the Sun*, is the great bugbear of aestheticism. Exactly why this should be so, and what consequences follow from it, are questions worth pondering. For aestheticism, far from being the fragile flower of culture it was once (mistakenly) thought to be by writers who looked to more "robust" varieties of belief for significant signs of the shape our civilization was assuming, has proved to be remarkably durable. Today, certainly, it commands a greater intellectual allegiance in our culture than is commonly acknowledged—in large part, perhaps, because so many of its tenets have been absorbed into the culture itself.

One of the reasons—I think it is the principal reason—for the basic antagonism that obtains between aestheticism and fatherhood is the relation in which aestheticism stands to nature. Simply stated, aestheticism sets itself *against* nature, toward which it adopts an attitude of irony and condescension. Aestheticism opposes the authority of all biological imperatives. By extension, moreover, it casts doubt on all principles of continuity and necessity based on or implied by the laws of nature, for which it is eager to substitute the disjunctions and self-inventions of cultural artifice. Toward language, as toward life, it holds an essentially "plastic" view. Finding the *données* of nature an intolerable imposition on the freedom of the mind to impose its will on experience, aestheticism seeks a radical redress of its grievances in the realm of culture. Oscar Wilde's famous quip about life imitating art was always, perhaps, more amusing than true, but there is this to be said for it: it does, without question, apply to the life of culture even if it does not apply to the life of nature, and it is usually culture that the aesthete has in mind when he speaks of "life."

It has never been sufficiently acknowledged, I think, that Freud's pioneering work, which upholds the fear and the authority of fatherhood as a primal condition of life, came out of the same culture that produced this aestheticism. One way of understanding Freud's whole psychological edifice is to see it as a challenge to and criticism of the aesthetic dissembling that characterized the European culture of his day, which, though bourgeois and eminently respectable, was completely in thrall to the conventions of decorative euphemism on which aestheticism depends. Between Beardsley, say, and Freud there is a curious symmetry of vision, with Beardsley choosing to celebrate all those dislocations of the psyche that Freud set out to repair. In this respect, the "psychology" of Art Nouveau—the style that stands at

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the center of the aesthetic movement and yet, paradoxically, was so beloved by Freud's middle-class contemporaries—was what psychoanalysis was conceived to combat and, in a sense, to "cure." A psychology like Freud's, based on the proposition that anatomy is fate, could not be anything but opposed to a mode of aesthetic artifice designed to deny the functions of nature. Art Nouveau made of nature something ornamental and fantastic: botanical motifs and the attributes of the human anatomy, like the erotic impulses they were employed to symbolize and subvert, were removed from the realm of the organic and made to serve a life-denying, purely aesthetic strategy. Life, in Art Nouveau, is something to be feared and forestalled, shrouded in a decorative languor that renders the imperatives of nature supererogatory.

WHICH brings us to Donald Barthelme's *The Dead Father.** In this short novel the ghosts of the aesthetic movement meet the phantom fears of the Freudian family romance. Fatherhood is caustically enthroned as ogrehood, and all familial relations reduced to offenses of taste—the only offenses that can any longer be taken seriously from the aesthetic point of view. Yet something has happened to the feigned detachment and hauteur that once characterized the aesthetic attitude. No longer secure in its distance from the world, it has adopted the tactics of a more militant and polemical irony—the tactics of Dada. In *The Dead Father,* the assault on fatherhood and the aggrandizement of art—twin aspects of a single struggle—are accomplished by means of a style in which all emotions but the aesthetic are shown to be ridiculous and destructive. At the same time, since the assault on fatherhood is inevitably an assault on adulthood, the virtues of aestheticism are identified with the freedom and fetishism of childhood. Which is, indeed, to return to the aesthetic assumptions of Dada—a name which, in this context, acquires yet another irony.

Taking his cue from the triumphant revival of Dada in the visual arts, from which he has borrowed actual visual devices in some of his earlier works, Mr. Barthelme has fashioned a fictional style, at once deadpan and disjunctive, mocking and digressive, that is the literary equivalent of the Dada collage. The aim is, apparently, to write a kind of "children's book" for adults—a genre that permits the author to address knowing readers with a wink as he distends his narrative with vivid and amusing irrelevancies that, like the details of a crowded collage, can be counted on to lend a sense of mystery and complexity and a certain decorative appeal to what, in the case of *The Dead Father,* is actually a rather simple fantasy of filial revenge.

The story itself, such as it is, has the quality of a fairy tale or folk tale that has been scissored, Dada-style, into shreds, and then reassembled with derisory and disproportionate embellishments. The fun is in the embellishments, and the moral is in the tale—there, and in the "Manual" of moral instruction that Mr. Barthelme inserts into the narative lest we mistake his already obvious purpose. For Mr. Barthelme is, with all his waggishness, a very didactic writer, and *The Dead Father* is, despite its facetious tone, a very moralistic book—but moralistic, to be sure, in the new fashion, which yearns for life to be free of all condition and contingency and which, as a consequence, despises all evidence of growth, attachment, and maturation as an obstacle to its cherished ontological freedom. Or, as Julie, the foolish "heroine" of *The Dead Father,* explains to its eponymous victim: "They are [fifty-year-old] boys because they don't want to be old farts. . . . The old fart is not cherished in this society."

The Dead Father—he is given no other name in the book—is the dreaded and archetypal "old fart" incarnate, and *The Dead Father* itself is a mock-epic account of the journey to his own burial he endures at the hands of his son, Thomas, who is aided by a retinue of disreputable revelers. The Dead Father is, in this surrealist odyssey, an immense and horrific figure, at once a corpse being dragged by gigantic cables overland to his monumental grave in a distant place and a talkative, demanding, imperious, terrible-tempered tyrant, very much alive in asserting his terrifying and irrational appetites and prerogatives—a figure straight out of *Ubu Roi,* only magnified in size and fury and silliness, and redrawn to the lineaments of Freudian fatherhood. But this Father is also the state, if not indeed society itself—symbol of all authority and order, which, in Mr. Barthelme's social cosmos, is always and inevitably an insane authority and a malevolent order.

This is our first glimpse of the monster Father in the prologue:

> Dead, but still with us, still with us, but dead.
>
> No one can remember when he was not here in our city positioned like a sleeper in troubled sleep, the whole great expanse of him running from the Avenue Pommard to the Boulevard Grist. Overall length, 3,200 cubits. Half buried in the ground, half not. At work ceaselessly night and day through all the hours for the good of all. He controls the hussars. Controls the rise, fall, and flutter of the market. Controls what Thomas is thinking, what Thomas has always thought, what Thomas will ever think, with exceptions. . . . We *want* the Dead Father to be dead. We sit with tears in our eyes wanting the Dead Father to be dead—meanwhile doing amazing things with our hands.

There follow then the twenty-three slivered chapters of the narrative, each a mini-scene of the absurd that offers a variation or illumination of the themes sounded in the prologue—the dreaded omnipotence of the Dead Father, and Thomas's wish to see him really dead and buried. The progress of the narrative is the fulfillment of that wish as the Dead Father, despite all his railing and resistance, is slowly, painfully stripped of his authority and placed in his grave.

There is almost no action to speak of in this narrative, but a lot of talk in which there are references to action. Thomas's ragged band tires of the labor of hauling the Dead Father. They set up camp, are given their ration of rum, have a fish-fry, resume their thankless

* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 177 pp., $7.95.

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labor again, and so on. Thomas meanwhile cavorts with Julie, his girlfriend, or Julie talks with Emma, the other girl in the story, but mainly, but mainly, they all talk to or about the Dead Father himself, or watch his progressively enfeebled antics. Even in his decline—and this, I take it, is Mr. Barthelme's point—it is still the Dead Father who is in control, who cannot be exorcised even in death.

It is for the Dead Father that all vitality is reserved, which, given the terms of Mr. Barthelme's style, means that he gets the best lines and the most vivid images. In one of the nonsensical embellishments of the narrative, the Dead Father is recounting one of his heroic "erotic" exploits:

> We spent many nights together all roaratorious and filled with furious joy. I fathered upon her in those nights the poker chip, the cash register, the juice extractor, the kazoo, the rubber pretzel, the cuckoo clock, the key chain, the dime bank, the pantograph, the bubble pipe, the punching bag, both light and heavy, the inkblot, the nose drop, the midget Bible, the slot-machine slug, and many other useful and humane cultural artifacts, as well as some thousands of children of the ordinary sort. I fathered as well upon her various institutions useful and humane such as the credit union, the dog pound, and parapsychology. I fathered as well various realms and territories all superior in terrain, climatology, laws, and customs to this one. I overdid it but I was madly in love, that is all I can say in my own defense.

Thus, by means of a literary collage, Mr. Barthelme gives us a parody of bourgeois capitalism, the history of which is subsumed in the Dead Father's greedy appetites.

What momentum *The Dead Father* attains, however, is to be found in the campaign against fatherhood itself. There are two sides to this campaign—one devoted to delivering the Dead Father to his grave, the other (the source of greater anguish for Thomas) devoted to resisting the terrible fate of replacing him, of relinquishing boyhood for fatherhood itself. Early on in the novel, the conflict between fatherhood and aestheticism is made quite explicit. The Dead Father is speaking of the terrible burdens of fatherhood:

> Children, he said. Without children I would not be the Father. No Fatherhood without childhood. I never wanted it, it was thrust upon me. Tribute of a sort but I could have done without, fathering then raising each of the thousands and thousands and tens of thousands. . . . Would have preferred remaining in my study comparing editions of Klinger, the first state, the second state, the third state, and so on, was there parting along the fold? and so on, water stain and so on, but this was not possible, all went forth and multiplied, and I had to Father, it was the natural order . . . but I wanted to wonder if if if I put a wood pulp mat next to a 100 per cent rag print would there be foxing and whether the rumbling of the underground would shake the chalk dust from my pastels or not.

When Thomas comes to speak of his own life, however, the mock-heroic alternatives of the Dead Father are replaced by a deflated mockery and hopelessness:

> Nnnnnnxt, wishing with all my heart and all my soul to be true to the aspirations and prefabrications of my generation the boys of '34 to be precise, I married. Oh, did I marry. I married and married and married moving from comedy to farce to burlesque with lightsome heart. Oh joy oh bliss oh joy oh bliss. When the bliss had blistered and the smoke had cleared I found that I had fathered, but only once, nota bene nota bene. Then a period of what I can only describe as vacancy.

The most radical of the fantasies conjured up to obliterate the very idea of fatherhood is Mr. Barthelme's fantasy of the Wends. To reach their destination—which is, of course, to destroy the Dead Father once and for all—Thomas's party must pass through the country of the Wends, a Utopia of Edenic sublimity:

> Let me tell you about the Wends, the Wend said. We Wends are not like other people. We Wends are the fathers of ourselves.
>
> You are?
>
> Yes, said the Wend, that which all men have wished to be, from the very beginning, we are.
>
> Amazing, said Thomas, how is that accomplished?
>
> It is accomplished by being a Wend, the leader said. Wends have no wives, they have only mothers. Each Wend impregnates his own mother and thus fathers himself. We are all married to our mothers, in proper legal fashion.

Thomas has no hope of ever attaining the utopian bliss of being a Wend, but for his (and our) edification in the imperfect world we inhabit, Mr. Barthelme provides a thirty-five-page "Manual for Sons" between Chapters 17 and 18. Compounded of nonsense and primitive fear, the "Manual" spells out the case against fatherhood in all its aspects, from the aesthetic to the social to the sexual, and concludes by denying the son any hope of recompense for what he has suffered at the hands of fatherhood, even the hope of patricide. The only solace is a withdrawal from the imperatives of nature:

> It is not necessary to slay your father, time will slay him, that is a virtual certainty. Your true task lies elsewhere.
>
> Your true task, as a son, is to reproduce every one of the enormities touched upon in this manual, but in attenuated form. You must become your father, but a paler, weaker version of him. The enormities go with the job, but close study will allow you to perform the job less well than it has previously been done, thus moving toward a golden age of decency, and calmed fevers. Your contribution will not be a small one, but "small" is one of the concepts that you should shoot for. . . . Choose one of your most deeply held beliefs, such as the belief that your honors and awards have something to do with you, and abjure it. . . . You see the pattern, put it into practice. *Fatherhood can be, if not conquered, at least "turned down" in this generation*—by the combined efforts of all of us together. [Emphasis in original.]

"We have seen that the key idea, in fatherhood, is 'responsibility.'" Mr. Barthelme tells us in this "Manual for Sons," and it is re-

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sponsibility, above all, that must be abjured.

The Dead Father, as can be gathered from these excerpts, is Mr. Barthelme's most explicit statement of the view that has governed all of his work—a view that holds life itself in contempt, and seeks a redress of its grievances in the kind of literary artifice that shuts out all reference to the normal course of human feeling. Art, in the scenario of this style, is a weapon in the war against nature, and nature, paradoxically, the enemy of innocence. His, I think, is the most sophisticated, because the most calculated and refined, expression of that hatred of the family that was a hallmark of the ideology of the counterculture of the 60's, and distinguished from other such expressions by allying itself with art, rather than with nature, in its search for innocence and escape. Perhaps it is that alliance—so distant from the vulgarities of the counterculture itself—that has won Mr. Barthelme his great following among critics and professors and literary editors, if not among the readers of fiction. For what he offers that specialized public is the illusion that salvation lies in the inner sanctum of their own profession.

Music

Heifetz the Virtuoso

Bruce Kovner

ALTHOUGH he is the most popular and widely-recorded violinist of this century, possessing, by general agreement, the greatest violin technique in living memory, Jascha Heifetz has been the subject of critical controversy ever since he burst upon the music world nearly sixty years ago. To his admirers, Heifetz has an almost preternatural capacity to communicate that sweeps all doubt before it and distinguishes his playing from that of the ordinary performer. They perceive, besides the well-known technique, a sensuousness, an intensity, and a native musical understanding that make him preeminent among violinists of our time. To his critics, however, Heifetz's playing seems ostentatious, egocentric, exaggerated, fussy, and unmusical. For them, his unmatched technical prowess only underlines a temperamental inability to serve the musical ideas of the composer rather than his own whims or the public's predilection for musical acrobatics. In perhaps the best-known attack on Heifetz's playing, Virgil Thomson, the composer and one-time music critic of the New York *Herald Tribune,* coined the term "silk underwear music" to describe the style and substance of Heifetz's playing:

> If ever I heard luxury expressed in music, it was there. His famous silken tone, his equally famous double stops, his well-known way of hitting the true pitch squarely in the middle, his justly remunerated mastery of the musical marshmallow, were like so many cushions of damask and down to the music ear. . . .
>
> There is no weakness in him; he can do anything he wants to do with the instrument. There is merely, for this listener, a vast banality about what he seems to want. . . .

More recently, Alan Rich, reviewing a new RCA retrospective of Heifetz's career,* carried Thomson's attack one step further by arguing that all of Heifetz's performances, not excluding the "silk underwear music," were infected by an egotism and bad taste that made those records uniformly insufferable:

> There isn't a line of melody anywhere in the vastness of *The Heifetz Collection* . . . not the smallest cornball encore, not the profoundest Bach slow movement, not even a piece like the Bruch concerto . . . [that does not] wrest the attention away from the object and toward the way it is being played.

The result, for Rich, is a testament of "misguided musicianship" and "misinformed mind" so bad that he cannot even "find the right words to tell . . . how dreadful these records are."

All this hostility to Heifetz is at least to some extent the reflection of a general skepticism over the role of technical virtuosity in performance, and in the fabric of music itself. In the past, the display of virtuosity was often accomplished in disregard of the written score. Singers added embellish-

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* *The Heifetz Collection,* RCA ARM 4-0942, 0943, 0944, 0945, 0946, and 0947; six volumes of four records each. All individual recordings mentioned here, unless otherwise indicated, are included in this set.

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ments or entire arias to an opera in order to display their voices to advantage, and instrumental virtuosos thought nothing of tampering with passages by adding octaves, double stops, or otherwise rearranging a composer's musical ideas. In the 20th century, this freedom with the written score is rarely exercised, but great technique—itself more common today than it was before—is still suspect because it is so often achieved without any genuine understanding of the musical ideas behind the notes being played.

As the foremost violin virtuoso of the century, Heifetz (like Vladimir Horowitz, his counterpart among pianists) is thus a natural target for those who fear that technical virtuosity has displaced musical intelligence in modern performance practice. But are these fears justified? It is true that much of Heifetz's popularity is due to his unequaled technical skills. He has often recorded display pieces that are devoid of serious musical content but which have found a large audience because of their dazzling show of violin pyrotechnics. (Indeed, his recordings of Drigo's *Valse bluette* or Bazzini's *La Ronde des lutins* remain as spectacular an example of violin technique as can be heard on records.) Moreover, when he has recorded more substantial works, his technique has been an important element in their success: for example, in the Prokofiev G-minor concerto, where the articulation, rhythmic security, and unremitting tension of the playing have never been matched; or in the Sibelius concerto, where the fast tempos, the purity of the harmonics, and the clarity of the soaring runs in thirds, octaves, and tenths provide an intensity and direction that no other violinist has approached.*

YET Heifetz's successes are based on more than technique alone. Compare, for example, his recording of the Bach unaccompanied G-minor sonata with that of a much younger virtuoso, Paul Zukofsky.† Zukofsky plays all four movements of the work well, but Heifetz's performance, slower and indeed less virtuosic, is the more effective. In Heifetz's recording, the subject of the fugue is stately rather than rushed, as in the Zukofsky; Heifetz allows it to grow in tension until, toward the end of the movement when it is presented in the bass with chords piled on top of it, it emerges heavy with drama and authority. In the Siciliana, the notes produced on the low g-string are not hurried, but are permitted by Heifetz to hold their own in a dialogue with the upper three strings. And in the Presto, where Zukofsky's performance demonstrates astounding technique, Heifetz adopts a slower pace, giving the melodic line room to sing, yet, with subtle variations in tempo, inflection, and tone manages to achieve an intensity and coherence that Zukofsky is unable to match.

Heifetz's claims as a serious artist, then, are based on interpretive skills as well as technical prowess. It does not, however, follow that he is equally well-suited to play all music. Along with Horowitz (about whom Virgil Thomson also had damning judgments to make) Heifetz is perhaps the best-known representative of what might be called the "coloristic" style of performance. His playing, that is, shows a particular concern for the sensual beauty of a tone or a phrase, as against the practice of artists like Joseph Szigeti or Artur Schnabel, who characteristically emphasize the large-scale grammar of a piece, such as the major harmonic shifts, the relationship of movements, and the musical form. Works like the Vieuxtemps or Bruch violin concertos, which are highly dependent on expressive effects—the contour of a melody, the quality of the sound, variations of dynamics—lend themselves well to the "coloristic" style, but this style is often inadequate to weightier works like the Beethoven sonatas, in which the logical development of a musical idea is sustained throughout every movement and finally throughout the piece as a whole.

This may be why it is sometimes said of Heifetz that the worse the quality of the music he plays, the better he plays it. There is, I think, a measure of truth in that statement—more, in any case, than most Heifetz admirers would like to admit. Many of the Heifetz recordings that are mentioned as unrivaled, rather than just good or interesting, are pieces that show off the violin well but which cannot usually be considered great music. The Glazounov, Vieuxtemps, and Bruch concertos, the Saint-Saëns Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, and Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen*, are all tuneful and diverting works, but they can hardly compare for the profundity of their musical thought with the Beethoven sonatas for violin and piano or the Brahms concerto. And just as Heifetz is unrivaled in playing the former group of works, it is in his performances of the latter works that Heifetz's playing more than occasionally proves disappointing, inconsistent, or just bad. His recording of the Beethoven concerto with Toscanini shows that he is capable of playing Beethoven well, but his recording of the Kreutzer sonata, with Emmanuel Bay,** turns it into a piece for violin with a dab of piano accompaniment, rather than the serious battle that seems implicit in Beethoven's score. Moreover, there is a fussiness of detail in his recordings of this and other Beethoven sonatas that detracts from the musical line and that makes what should sound inexorable seem weak and mannered instead.

AARON COPLAND, discussing the qualities necessary in a great performer, has written that "Musical interpretation demands of the performer an even wider range than of the actor, because the musician must play every role in the piece." He might have added, not just

* The better of the two recordings he has done of the Sibelius concerto is available on Seraphim 60221 (mono—with the London Philharmonic under Beecham) but the quality of sound on his more recent recording on RCA LSC 2435 (with the Chicago Symphony under Walter Hendl) is superior.

† Heifetz's 1953 recording of the Bach sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin is available in RCA LM 6105 (3 records, mono); Zukofsky's performance is on Vanguard VSD 71194/6.

** Beethoven Sonatas for Violin and Piano (Complete), RCA LM 6707 (5 records, mono).

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every role, but every play as well. But even though we often ask it of them, no performer is capable of taking on the musical personality appropriate to every piece, or of sympathizing with every style of musical expression in the literature of his instrument.

Heifetz is no exception. Judging at least from what he has chosen to record, he is out of sympathy with much of the most important music of the 20th century. He has twice recorded the Sibelius concerto, and he commissioned and recorded works from William Walton, Miklos Rozsa, and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco.* But he has recorded no Bartok, perhaps the most important composer for the violin in this century. He has recorded nothing of Berg, whose violin concerto is sometimes considered the single most notable contribution to that literature in the last fifty years. He has recorded no Webern or Schoenberg, almost nothing of Stravinsky or Shostakovich, and although he has recorded one Prokofiev concerto, he has left the sonatas untouched.

It is in the recordings of the largest works of the violin literature—the Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Beethoven, Brahms, Prokofiev, and Bruch concertos—that his greatest achievements can be heard. If in the chamber works, particularly of Beethoven and Mozart, his performing style seems at its least convincing, and if his attitude toward contemporary music leaves much to be desired, we should at least recognize that the problems are derived not from "bad taste" or "misguided musicianship" but from a particular musical style. However we may feel about that style, it remains the case that it is combined with gifts such as are given to few performers. We are therefore lucky to have documented in the Heifetz recordings a career that can with justice be compared with that of a Paganini or a Liszt.

* The Walton concerto is included in *The Heifetz Collection* and is also available, together with the Castelnuovo-Tedesco, on RCA LM 2740 (mono); the Rozsa *Tema con Variazioni* is on RCA LSC 2770.

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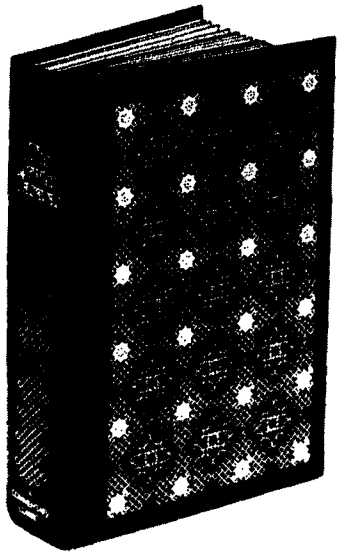

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Books in Review

On the Right?

THE CONSERVATIVE INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT IN AMERICA: SINCE 1945. By GEORGE H. NASH. *Basic Books. 463 pp. $20.00.*

UP FROM COMMUNISM: CONSERVATIVE ODYSSEYS IN AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY. By JOHN P. DIGGINS. *Harper & Row. 522 pp. $20.00.*

Reviewed by NELSON W. POLSBY

WHAT'S A conservative? Some exceedingly good minds have pondered this question, and it seems unlikely that there will ever be a definitive answer, good for all contexts and occasions. Undoubtedly the most sustained and persistent long-term empirical investigation of the matter is unfolding in the immensely valuable, and rather controversial, scholarly work of Herbert McClosky and his students, who are examining the extent to which conservatism is truly a set of psychological dispositions built into the structure of the personality rather than merely a situationally convenient label, and trying to determine if there is a predictably conservative "side" to all sorts of issues.

The matter is by no means a simple one. Consider, for instance, the contemporary "conservative" view with respect to the protection of political discourse, the assignment of special value to "those processes of rational deliberation and discussion," in the words of the late political theorist Willmoore Kendall, "that we know to be the characteristic features of truly civil society." Surely a signal achievement of recent conservative writing on current affairs has been an insistence on civility in political discourse, a refusal to knuckle under to demagoguery or mob sentiment. Yet was not this same Willmoore Kendall a fervent defender of America's worst demagogue of the last thirty years, Joseph McCarthy? Indeed he was. Kendall's record is in this particular not unique. His student, William F. Buckley, Jr., now generally recognized as a central figure in the resurgence of American conservatism, began his career (in *God and Man at Yale*) with a blast at what as a very young controversialist he described as the "superstitions" of academic freedom. In this he was fully as arrogant as (though more long-winded than) any New Left graffito. In his second book, *McCarthy and His Enemies,* Buckley and Brent Bozell undertook a sophistical rescue job in behalf of McCarthyite mendacity—Ivy League mouthpieces for a wretched political thug.

The current state of affairs is thus amazing to someone who, like myself, came to political semi-consciousness in time to be inducted into the so-called "silent" generation of the 1950's. To me, the notion of seeing political liberty upheld by public figures who call themselves conservatives is a novel and refreshing turn of events.

Because the two books under review are mainly about conservatives, I shall refrain from poking about in the equally dense nest of paradoxes on the other side of the American political spectrum. I cannot resist, however, noting one oddity. It is now well recognized that many American liberals sacrificed a good bit of credibility in the ideological debates of the post-World War II period because of their flirtations during the 30's with Communism at its Stalinist worst. Pro-McCarthy conservatives, who woke up to domestic threats to civility in American political discourse only when these were the work of left-wing campus crazies, deserve an equally ripe raspberry for the selectivity of their late-blooming concern.

HISTORIAN George Nash identifies three main streams of postwar conservative thinking in America. There is, first, the "libertarian" stream, "resisting the threat of the ever-expanding state to liberty, private enterprise, and individualism." Second, there is "traditionalism." "Shocked by totalitarianism," says Nash, "total war, and the development of secular, rootless, mass society during the 1930's and 1940's, [these] 'new conservatives' urged a return to traditional religious and ethical absolutes and a rejection of the 'relativism' which had allegedly corroded Western values and produced an intolerable vacuum that was filled with demonic ideologies." Third, there is "militant, evangelistic anti-Communism."

The central issue that Nash's book explores is whether these three streams can be made to flow together comfortably to make a comprehensive set of beliefs, more or less universally subscribed to by all those adopting the "conservative" label. Despite a conscientious effort to identify "syntheses," or to announce a "consolidation," Nash's book amounts to a chronicle of intramural skirmishes. The "conservative intellectual movement" is, if anything, even more complex and more variegated than Nash's preliminary characterization suggests. The three main streams, on coming together, have managed to produce an enormously complicated delta, replete with cross-currents, backwaters, and unexpected swirls and eddies.

There are all sorts of examples of this complexity. I suppose nobody doubts Robert Nisbet's credentials as a "conservative" social scientist; yet I first met him at a Hubert Humphrey task force in 1968. Four years earlier, as we all remember, Barry Goldwater's famous aphorism in defense of "extremism" is supposed to have been penned by another "conservative" intellectual, Harry Jaffa. Adorning the jacket of Nash's book are the portraits of twenty-five of his most prominent subjects, laid out in orderly tic-tac-toe fashion. The luck of the alphabet puts Walter Berns in the upper-

NELSON W. POLSBY *is professor of political science at the University of California, and most recently author, with Aaron Wildavsky, of a new edition of* Presidential Elections (1976).

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left-hand corner. Professor Berns's principal contributions to contemporary political theory have been discussions of the limitations upon "freedom" necessary to the good society. Immediately below is the picture of that apostle of freedom, Milton Friedman. With a bemused candor, Nash sorts through numerous other differences in the conservative camp. Evidently, conservatives cannot even agree that liberalism is the doctrine of the enemy: Peter Viereck and Clinton Rossiter run off the reservation on this issue.

It is undoubtedly foolish to expect unanimity across a wide range of issues from any sizable group of intellectuals. So it ought not to surprise consumers of intellectual goods to find some "conservatives" strongly favoring, and others dubious about (among other things) freedom, liberalism, religious orthodoxy, Joe McCarthy, Barry Goldwater, and Hubert Humphrey. Even granting strong central tendencies among "conservatives"—such that on any single issue most of Nash's subjects would (one surmises) vote overwhelmingly in a particular direction—there is far more to be learned about what these and other intellectuals think by discussing issues one by one. "Liberal" and "conservative," "Left" and "Right" are perfectly serviceable categories for discussing the relatively crude and reflexive political responses of people who do not take the trouble to justify their political choices in a detailed way. But why proceed in this fashion with intellectuals?

One reason, I suppose, is to monitor the success of intellectuals in mobilizing mass support for their views. There is, however, good reason to doubt that masses are paying the slightest heed to conservative intellectuals in this country, or to any other group of serious thinkers. According to this analysis, James Buckley's election as Senator from New York, for example, owes less to his view of gnosticism or original sin than to a split of the anti-war and traditional Democratic vote between Charles Goodell and Richard Ottinger. Aside from the fluke election of Buckley, conservatives can point to very few

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triumphs with the masses. And what a triumph for "conservatism" Buckley has been: his main legislative accomplishment has been a famous "amendment" vastly increasing the powers of the federal government to interfere in the administration of educational institutions. On another front, the circulation of William Buckley's *National Review*, by common repute the house organ of American conservatism, remains modest.

If, then, conservatives are uninfluential with the masses and only modestly successful in achieving a common view across the board themselves, of what does the conservative "movement" consist?

The answer appears to be: of small, mostly unrelated groups exploring somewhat different problems and arising out of somewhat different intellectual heritages. The Chicago economist Milton Friedman, his teachers, and his students. The late political philosopher Leo Strauss and some of his students. Jet-set personality William Buckley and contributors to his magazine. A few European expatriates teaching at Catholic colleges. A cluster of Southerners. Another cluster of New York ex-Communists. Russell Kirk, sitting solitarily on a Michigan farm. Plus a few others, mostly unaffiliated.

JOHN P. DIGGINS makes no sustained attempt to map the contemporary conservative scene. If Nash is a mapmaker, Diggins is a geologist, whose efforts are directed at examining how the commitments of four latter-day conservatives boiled up out of their respective Communist pasts.

Diggins's four exemplars are Max Eastman, John Dos Passos, Will Herberg, and James Burnham. For all four, Diggins shows substantial continuities of intellectual style and mood regardless of the substance of their convictions at any particular time. In long, involved chapters Diggins explores each thinker "before" and "after" his conversion from his own brand of Communism to his own brand of conservatism. His purpose is quite different from Nash's reportage. He wants to *explain* something: "How the radical experience of a generation of writers influenced the cultural and political climate of post-World War II America, providing much of the conservative rationale for America's hard-line stance in the early years of the cold war." I regret to say that I am unable to discover what that influence was. I suspect that to find the rationale behind American participation in the cold war, Mr. Diggins is looking in the wrong place. Far more profitable for his purposes would have been intellectual biographies of Harry Truman, Dean Acheson, George Kennan, Arthur Vandenberg, and Robert A. Taft.

To be sure, these men would have provided neither Communist pasts nor a common Left-Right trajectory. They would, however, have brought Diggins closer to postwar American foreign policy-making. The lesson can be generalized. Diggins conceived his book while confronted with the contemporary New Left and quite understandably began to wonder whether time would affect the urgent commitments of Marxist activists of the 1960's in the same diverse ways that it did for their counterparts in the 20's and 30's. What should be made explicit is the strong likelihood that the New Left will turn out over the long run to be more or less as politically inconsequential in America as the Old Left—even in its more recent right-wing incarnation—has proved to be.

My doubts about the political significance of Diggins's subjects are not meant to deter readers from *Up From Communism*. Sometimes interesting social—if not political or intellectual—history can be written through the lives of welterweight thinkers. And for those readers who have vivid memories of factional strife in the American Communist party in the 1930's, Diggins's book undoubtedly will be pleasantly nostalgic, even though it is about that small minority who made the hegira all the way to the Right.

IF I am right in thinking that American conservative intellectuals have, on the whole, been neither especially persuasive nor powerful, what accounts for the view that somehow conservative thinking has recently had a resurgence in this country? I'm afraid the best answer is that present-day intellectual "conservatism" has been taken over by liberals. If not taken over, then strongly infiltrated.

Consider the three types of conservatism identified by George Nash. Since the foundation of Americans for Democratic Action in 1948, anti-Communism can hardly be regarded as a monopoly of right-wing intellectuals. There were plenty of ex-radicals besides James Burnham and Whittaker Chambers who, without climbing into bed with Joe McCarthy, understood the evils of Stalinism. And, of course, not all liberal anti-Communists were ex-radicals.

Thus the nonexistent rise of anti-Communism in the 1960's will not do as an explanation for the revival of interest in conservatism. Neither will distaste for the politics of mass society. This has been an issue among intellectuals—Left and Right—for too long, certainly, on the Left, at least since the flight of European intellectuals from Hitler. To a remarkable extent the writings of these distinguished refugees—Franz Neumann, Sigmund Neumann, Erich Fromm, Hannah Arendt, the Frankfurt group, and so on—reflect an apparent desire to cast their personal trauma in some larger framework, and invariably the central motif was the intrusion of politics upon previously private spheres—the family, the primary group, the personality.

It is certainly true that there tended to be a distinctively conservative answer to this universally perceived problem. This was characteristically nostalgic or authoritarian. That is, rather than recommending the strengthening of individual autonomy or the shoring up of political interest groups that could contend with the totalitarian state, conservatives tended to favor the substitution of religious for political absolutism or reversion to a traditionalist, status-ridden, social order.

I rather think that as the New Left blows itself out, the argument between conservatives and liberals on this set of issues will reemerge. The point I would stress now is simply that distaste for mass society and for demagogic politics char-

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acterizes American intellectuals most of the way across the political spectrum, excepting only New Left tribunes of "the people," and this has been true at least since the late 1930's. So the challenge of the New Left may partially account for the apparent revival of a conservatism which has allied itself with embattled liberal pluralists.

The larger part of the story, however, seems to me to reside in what Nash describes as the "libertarian" strain of contemporary conservatism, that branch of conservatism that directly challenges the efficacy and the wisdom of government. Here we can point to the influence of specific—and recent—historical events adding up to a general disillusionment among many intellectuals with the Great Society and its aftermath. It is not only conservatives who have asked hard questions about the educational consequences of busing, or claimed that affirmative-action programs violated civil rights, or attacked the welfare system in America, or questioned the moral force of United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

I suppose that because he was in general on one side of these sorts of issues in the 1950's and on another side in the 1970's a writer like Nathan Glazer justifies characterizing his attitudes as having changed from "mildly radical" to "mildly conservative." The issues themselves changed in this same period, of course, and so did the facts upon which policy preferences presumably rest. Conservatives, with their steadfast view of the evils of government, were joined in the 1970's by liberals who had come to believe that many governmental activities they had formerly supported were not working properly. This appears to account for a large part of the "conservative" revival.

If this analysis is correct, the truly interesting phenomenon in contemporary intellectual history is not what happened to the conservatives, who have had their umbrellas up right along, rain or shine, but rather what has happened to the liberals. Nash says that one of the things that has annoyed conservative intellectuals the most over the years has been the view that American intellectual life is entirely dominated by liberalism and its concerns. I think one of Nash's purposes in undertaking his book was to argue otherwise, but I wonder if he has made his case.

Against the Bar

UNEQUAL JUSTICE: LAWYERS AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN MODERN AMERICA. By JEROLD S. AUERBACH. *Oxford. 382 pp. $13.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR.

Unequal Justice is a philippic against the American bar (with the exception of a few saints and martyrs like William Kunstler), particularly corporation lawyers. As Jerold Auerbach, a historian, sees it, these evil men and evil institutions have for more than a century conspired to serve and preserve "corporate capitalism," racism, privilege, and injustice generally.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with 140-proof polemics, so long as the stuff is plainly labeled. Auerbach honestly disclaims any intention to act as a "neutral observer" or to treat "truth . . . as two-sided." Although he frequently cites Abraham Lincoln, the lawyer of the "plain people" (and also of the big corporations, for, as Auerbach seems unaware, he had such clients as the Illinois Central and Rock Island Railroads) as the antithesis of the lawyers he abhors, he would certainly be contemptuous of Lincoln's observation that "there are few things wholly evil or wholly good; almost everything is an inseparable compound of the two." He does not know what Lincoln, that great lawyer, knew very well: that a polemic, like a lawyer's brief or any other kind of advocacy above the level of rabble-rousing, is more effective when it appears to be reasoned, objective, and fair. He has marred his argument by sugges-

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tion of the false, suppression of the true, distortion of his adversaries' arguments, and the frequent use of half-truth and sometimes simple untruth.

In a way, this is a pity, for some of the indictments in *Unequal Justice* are valid, even if most of them have been made before and more convincingly. The American legal establishment did for many decades try by fair means and foul to exclude Jews and other newcomers from its upper levels. Most of its members did (and still do) share the American values, good and bad, of their day, including a belief (which still persists) in the efficiency of the profit motive. (All this is, of course, equally true of doctors, farmers, shopkeepers, and just about every other definable group in the population. The bar's special sin was that it spouted more cant about its noble ideals than any other trade except the clergy.) Immigrants to the United States frequently did not get equal justice, although (as Auerbach does not point out) most of them, including those from the British Isles, got more of it than they had in the old country. Most serious of all his charges, it is still true that the legal profession has done a poor job of getting its services to people in the lower- and middle-income brackets at prices those people can afford.

The book is not spoiled by any lack of diligent research. The author has waded through an astonishing quantity of tedious and long-winded bar-association oratory, unreadable house histories of law firms (usually written by senior partners who had nothing better to do), and biographies and autobiographies of lawyers long and justly forgotten, to say nothing of reams of correspondence entombed in various libraries. The trouble is rather that *Unequal Justice* is so obviously biased and intemperate (and sometimes so plainly inaccurate) that a reasonably well-informed reader is likely to discount its statements even when they appear to be true and in need of saying.

IT IS difficult to know where to start a partial catalogue of the book's vices, but I might as well begin at the beginning. One of Auerbach's major anathemas, to which he constantly returns, is legal education. His case is summed up in the Preface, where he describes his reasons for leaving the Columbia Law School, which he had entered in 1957, after his first year. ". . . [N]ot only were Columbia Law School and Wall Street stations on the same subway line; they were stations on the same career line. The message was never explicitly conveyed but it was conveyed through the curriculum we studied . . . , and the expected rewards for mastery of torts and contracts. Never was there a whisper of a suggestion that law related to choice, to history, to society, to justice."

As it happens, I began teaching law at Yale in 1957, and I therefore know that the latter statement was not true of Yale. Looking at the Columbia Law School catalogue for 1957-58, I found, sure enough, that torts and contracts were required for first-year students, as they were and are at virtually all law schools, for the same reasons that medical students are made to study anatomy. But so was the late Professor Julius Goebel's Development of Legal Institutions, whose purpose was "to give the student a grounding in the history of the common law and to instruct him in the elements of historical method indispensable to a lawyer . . . [and] to emphasize the political, social, and economic facts that have determined the course of the law's development." Second- and third-year courses included Jurisprudence (dealing, *inter alia*, with natural-law theory, sociological jurisprudence, and American legal realism), International Law, Islamic Law, Roman Law, Comparative Law, and many other subjects having no very obvious link with Wall Street.

Auerbach, who has a habit of gliding away from accounts of historical wrongs without any clear indication of whether they still exist, seems, in fact, to believe that law-school curricula are to this day "weighted toward protection of the interests of the wealthy and powerful." The allegation is contradicted by contemporary law-school catalogues. The only courses that are commonly required are Torts, Contracts, Procedure, Constitutional Law, and Criminal Law, none of which has more to do with the interests of the wealthy and powerful than with those of other citizens. Every law school of which I have knowledge offers a wide variety of courses in such areas as urban problems, consumer protection, and welfare law.

He similarly misconceives the problem of admission of blacks and members of other minority groups to law schools and the bar, as that problem exists today. There can be no doubt that many law schools, particularly in the South, long discriminated against blacks. Others, particularly the major schools, did not discriminate *against* blacks, but neither did they do anything to increase their enrollment. Today, however, a very large majority of law schools recruit and give substantial preferences to applicants from minority groups. Assertions that "nominally objective criteria of merit [meaning, presumably, the applicant's college record and score on the Law School Admission Test] are hardly unbiased" ignore or muddle the fact that the problem is not simply to get more black and Chicano lawyers, but to get more *good* black and Chicano lawyers. Many law schools, including Yale, learned or are learning by painful experience that the problem is not solved, but is rather aggravated, by grabbing almost any minority-group applicant with a B.A. Such practices, I think, do more to explain the fact that disproportionate numbers of blacks fail bar exams than does Professor Auerbach's accusation that bar examiners crudely and systematically discriminate against blacks. In virtually all jurisdictions, bar examinations are today graded blind; the examiners do not know the identity of the examinees whose papers they grade—a fact which Auerbach either does not know or chooses not to mention.

Auerbach tends generally to ignore whatever reforms have taken place in admission to law schools, to the bar, and to the big firms. In

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a piece on the Op Ed page of the New York *Times* (April 13, 1976), essentially a summary of what he has to say in the book, he describes "elite law firms as bastions of white, Protestant, male power," and adds that "minority-group members have been as unwelcome in Wall Street firms as in the boardrooms of the corporations they serve." Again, that *was* generally true twenty or thirty years ago—although with more exceptions than he cares to admit. But there are few, if any, Wall Street firms of which it is true today. On the evidence of law-school placement officers with whom I have talked, the big corporation firms in New York and other cities are quite willing, even eager, to hire good black graduates. Many of the latter are, however, more interested in public service, teaching, or practice in their own communities.

AUERBACH's methods are further illustrated by his misleading accounts of a number of episodes in legal history. There is, for example, a fairly long and highly tendentious account of the 1916 controversy over the confirmation of Justice Brandeis. In Auerbach's version, the opposition to Brandeis was based on "his Jewishness, his public service, his successful practice, his outspoken opposition to corporate arrogance, his social approach to legal problems, and his judgments upon the justness of a client's case." What role anti-Semitism may have played is hard to assess; if it was a factor, as it might well have been, it was covert. It is not mentioned at all in the exhaustive account of the struggle in Alpheus Mason's *Brandeis: A Free Man's Life*. Undoubtedly, much of the conservative opposition was based on a perception of Brandeis as a "radical," an enemy of big business, the "Railroad Wrecker." But some opposition came from liberals and reformers who thought Brandeis too favorable to capital, too willing to allow railroads and other corporations to make enormous profits. And more opposition was based on the fact that for many years (while he was attacking the New Haven Railroad and other monopolies) he had been counsel to, and a director and large stockholder of, the United Shoe Machinery Company, perhaps the most ruthless monopoly of them all. Auerbach devotes about seven pages to the dispute over Brandeis's confirmation without so much as mentioning the name of United Shoe Machinery.

At equal length and with still more purple rhetoric, Auerbach describes the "ordeal" of the late Harry Sacher and other lawyers who defended the principal satraps of the Communist party in a Smith Act trial in 1949. After the trial the judge, Harold R. Medina, found that the lawyers' courtroom conduct was in contempt of court and sentenced them to jail. (Sacher got six months.) The conviction was affirmed by the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and by the Supreme Court, in each of which there was a dissent. Auerbach sees the case as "part of a sustained,

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invidious, and . . . successful effort to intimidate lawyers for unpopular defendants and to discipline those whose beliefs or associations were adjudged subversive." He refers to "anti-Communist hysteria" and calls the contempt proceedings "diabolic." But nowhere has he a harsh word for the conduct of Sacher and his co-counsel. One may well question, as the dissenting judges did, and I do, whether Judge Medina should not have referred the contempt charges to another judge. But there was little doubt that discipline was called for. In the Circuit Court Jerome Frank spoke of "the lawyers' outrageous conduct—conduct of a kind which no lawyer owes his client, which cannot ever be justified." Charles Clark, who dissented, called their actions "abominable." Auerbach quotes neither of these comments.

As suggested by his treatment of the Brandeis confirmation, Auerbach is pretty free with accusations and heavy-handed insinuations of anti-Semitism. (Among the victims is Harlan F. Stone. Auerbach's "evidence" consists of three very short extracts taken out of context from a very long letter, which *may* be taken as uncomplimentary references to Jewish law students, although the letter does not mention Jews at all. But the evidence that Stone was not an anti-Semite is overwhelming; for example, many or most of his Supreme Court law clerks were Jewish.) The other side of this base coin is the plethora of derogatory statements about White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. There are references by the dozen to "the hegemony of Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture," "Anglo-Saxon Protestant hegemony," "an Anglo-Saxon professional elite," "the Protestant corporate professional establishment," "Guthrie, the association's Waspish president." If you substitute the word "Jewish" for "Anglo-Saxon" or "Protestant" for "Waspish" in these phrases, you can better appreciate the rancid flavor of racism which permeates *Unequal Justice*. I do not use the word lightly. I happen to be a Wasp (as Professor Auerbach would probably be quick to point out), but I do not think I am hypersensitive about it; most or all of Auerbach's denigrations were and are true of many Wasps. But it is the hallmark of racism that it attributes bad or good characteristics to all members of some ethnic group with which it is obsessed.

AUERBACH is very critical of the law schools' emphasis on "thinking like a lawyer" and "inductive reasoning, analytical precision, and verbal felicity." To do him justice, he practices what he preaches, for the book is innocent of these qualities, as exemplified by an attack on the late Alexander M. Bickel's last article in COMMENTARY ("Watergate and the Legal Order," January 1974). He accuses Bickel of a "sweeping exculpatory defense" of the Watergate conspirators by "equating them with all those protesters who opposed racial discrimination and the war in Vietnam" and even with the Warren Court. Bickel, he goes on, "equate[d] the civil disobedience of black citizens who protested against laws that deprived them of their constitutional rights with the criminal acts of government officials sworn to uphold the law."

Bickel, who was not given to sweeping generalizations and whose talents for analytical precision were of the first order, said nothing of the sort. He very carefully and plainly distinguished between violation of an unconstitutional law, which is not a crime at all, and "civil disobedience," which he defined as "the act of disobeying formally binding general law on grounds of moral or political principle without challenging the validity of that law." He said also that "even beyond the autonomy of conscience that the law is able to make allowance for within itself, the legal order may be said to countenance conscientious disobedience." He made not the slightest effort to "exculpate" the Watergate conspirators; what he did say, quite truly, was that there was a "point of contact" between them and others who deliberately violated constitutional laws which they thought stood in the way of justice. There is no need here to summarize Bickel's whole argument. Anyone who reads it will see that Auerbach has either deliberately distorted or utterly failed to understand it, probably both.*

Unequal Justice might have been a better book, a more convincing tract, if Professor Auerbach had more respect and talent for "thinking like a lawyer." As it is, I am left with deep, dark suspicions that his reasons for dropping out of the Columbia Law School were not exclusively the ones he gives.

* Although it did not in any way affect my judgment of *Unequal Justice*, I must note that I discovered, almost at the end of the book, a long footnote which similarly distorts and/or fails to comprehend an article of my own ("Lawyers at the Bar") in COMMENTARY, August 1974. Auerbach describes it as a "professional apology for Watergate lawyers"; according to his paraphrase, I said that "given the predominance of lawyers in public life, only their absence from Watergate crimes would deserve notice." What I actually said was quite different and, I think, true: "It is no wonder that the profession was so predominant in the Watergate cast of characters; its absence would have been far more astonishing. Whatever is done in government in America, for good or ill, is likely to be done by lawyers." I did not in any way defend the conduct of the Watergate lawyers.

Hitler & the German Spirit

THE LAST EUROPEAN WAR. By JOHN LUKACS. *Anchor Press/Doubleday. 562 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH SHATTAN

JOHN LUKACS has here attempted a diplomatic and psychological history of Europe during the first two years of World War II. As a diplomatic historian, Lukacs is a synthesizer rather than a researcher, and there are few surprises in his account of European international relations from 1939 to 1941, which draws heavily on the research of contemporary German historians. What *is* surprising is his analysis of the factors behind Germany's initial victories. Where other historians have pointed to Germany's formidable industrial infrastructure or to the heightened organizational capacities of a totalitarian regime, Lukacs finds the primary source of Germany's strength

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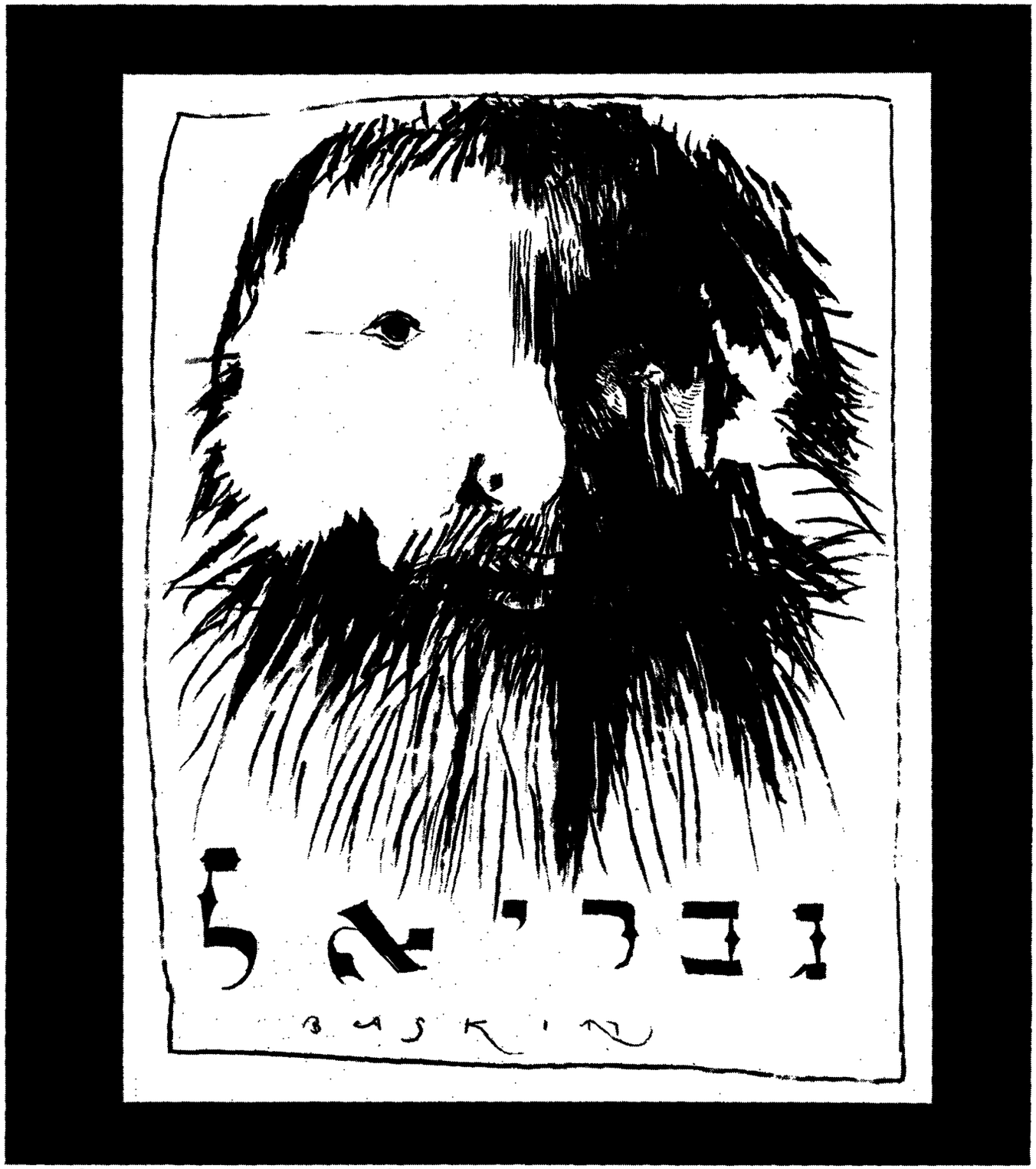

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in "the German spirit." That other students of the subject have failed to appreciate this intangible factor he attributes to their inability to liberate themselves from the misleading "Marxist categories" of modern social science and from the fallacies of a "materialistic" philosophy of history.

German preeminence, according to Lukacs, derived from a particular system of thought—"neo-idealism"—which was "the great German contribution in the intellectual history of Europe, ranging from philosophy to physics." Fortified by their unique philosophy, "the Germans had the potential to rejuvenate old Europe, to extend the European age, and the primacy of Europe, in the world for centuries to come." That they failed rather singularly to do so does not, in Lukacs's view, detract from the virtues of neo-idealism; instead, it reflects a "fatal flaw" in the German national character: "The Germans could be tactless and inconsiderate; they could cultivate their virtues to such systematic extremes that these became vices."

Since Lukacs hardly discusses the actual principles of "neo-idealism" (except to say that it represents a reaction to the "bourgeois materialism" and the "lifeless rationalism," respectively, of the 19th and 18th centuries), it may be useful to recall that the most characteristic feature of German idealism was its preoccupation with the *Volksgeist*, or national character. As against the universalizing impulse of French rationalism, German idealism held that each people had a spirit or genius, unique to itself, which determined its behavior and whose gradual unfolding constituted the core of its history. That Lukacs himself has been powerfully influenced by the *Volkisch* tradition becomes obvious in the second and more important part of his book, which focuses on the thoughts and sentiments of the European peoples between 1939 and 1941.

According to Lukacs, there are certain enduring "national habits of mind," far more important than such things as class structure, which determine the "national inclinations" of an entire people. It is soon apparent from his account, however, that these "national habits of mind" are little more than familiar national stereotypes. Thus, Lukacs maintains that during World War II, "the English feared defeat more than they feared death," a result of their "unthinking but deeply felt pride," while the French "feared death more than they feared defeat," a reflection of their "intellectualism" and "individualism." "Opportunism, grandiloquence, and humaneness" characterized the Italians, the Poles were "brave, quixotic, and garrulous," the Greeks "cunning and tough," while "a certain slowness of mind" was discernible in the Russians. (Interestingly enough, Lukacs, a native Hungarian who has lived in this country for many years, does not venture to describe the "national habits of mind" of the Hungarians; the Rumanians, on the other hand, traditional enemies of the Hungarians, are described simply as "shamelessly opportunistic.")

Lukacs's preoccupation with *Volkisch* forms of thought, with national psychology and nationalist ideas, leads him to downplay the significance of the political Left—with its commitment to an international and universalist vision of history—in the life of the nation-state. "The history of the Right, all present intellectual fashions notwithstanding, is generally more interesting than the history of the Left," he writes. "No matter how cruel, no matter how vulgar, Hitler had a more profound understanding of human nature than Marx." Lukacs argues that until 1941, because of the inherent weakness of Europe's Marxist parties, the burden of resistance to Nazi aggression fell on the Right, and that the main struggle in these crucial years was not between Right and Left, but within the Right itself, between those who regarded Communism as a greater evil than Nazism and those who did not. While socialists did join the resistance "eventually," he claims that "the principal opponents of Nazism, of Hitler, of Germany in 1939-41 were conservatives, often reactionaries, in Germany as well as in England —indeed, nearly everywhere."

As WITH Lukacs's simplifying descriptions of "national character," there is some truth in all this, but not very much. It is true that by 1939 the only resistance to Hitler in Germany came from conservatives, but this had little to do with the misleading ideology of the Left, as Lukacs claims. Rather, as George Lichtheim puts it in *Europe in the 20th Century*, "given the character of the regime, the total suppression of all political parties, and the mass execution or imprisonment of former socialist and Communist functionaries, the only effective opposition during the war was to be found among those conservatives who in 1933-34 had entered into an alliance with Hitler, only to be disillusioned by the increasingly terrorist and irrational traits of his personality." As for the earliest opponents of Nazism and Fascism in Europe, these were not Lukacs's "old conservative bourgeoisie or what had remained of the aristocracies" but rather the Social Democrats. In Germany, for example, the Social Democratic party (for all its faults) was the only political party to speak and vote against the Enabling Act of 1933, which in effect made Hitler a dictator; the German center and Right voted for it. And the same is true for Italy. Only the reformist socialists and the Left-liberals voted against the Acerbo Bill, which assured the consolidation of the Fascist dictatorship, while both the Italian center and the Right voted in favor. All too often, in other words, it was "reactionary patriotism" of the European Right which opened the door to dictatorship.

Again, Lukacs's assertion that the split within the European Right was between those who regarded Communism as a greater evil than Nazism and those who did not is only partially accurate. It is true, for instance, that before 1939 the British Right was split between Conservatives like Churchill, who felt Hitler must be resisted unconditionally, and Conservatives like Chamberlain, who believed that Hitler might be won over to a respectable variety of anti-Communism. But in September 1939, when Germany and the Soviet Union, newly allied, jointly as-

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saulted Catholic, conservative Poland, the British Conservatives came down *virtually to a man* against Hitler. After the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, it became rather difficult for anyone on the Right to argue, in good faith, that he was supporting Hitlerism to contain Bolshevism. Those European rightists who supported Hitler after 1939 did so not because they were anti-Communist, but because they were *anti-democratic*, because their animus toward the established parliamentary order was so great that they were prepared to welcome anyone who promised to destroy that order.

Lukacs's own views on the Hitler versus Stalin question are seriously inconsistent. In his discussion of Britain's appeasement policy, his sympathies are clearly with Churchill, and he is contemptuous of those Chamberlainites who believe Hitler could be fobbed off with concessions. Yet further on in his study he writes: "It is now universally thought that Nazism was much more criminal than Communism . . . *only* because of the Jewish issue [Lukacs's emphasis]. . . . Had Hitler and his cohorts not committed their awful deed . . . thoughtful people might have become amenable to the argument that, after all was said, Hitler and Nazism were less evil and much less cruel than Stalin and Communism." But at the time Churchill and Chamberlain were conducting their fateful debate, and even afterward, only a handful of people suspected that Hitler intended to murder the Jews of Europe, and they were not believed. Since Lukacs feels that, apart from the "Jewish issue," Stalin was far worse than Hitler, why does he not sympathize with Chamberlain rather than Churchill? According to this reading, after all, Chamberlain chose the lesser of the two evils.

PERHAPS the most disappointing section of the book is Lukacs's tendentious analysis of Hitler's anti-Semitic policies. In spite of the vast and meticulous body of scholarship proving that Hitler's determination to destroy European Jewry was a constant and unwavering purpose of his career, Lukacs claims that the decisive factor behind the Holocaust was American entry into the war which, it seemed to Hitler, was "prepared and facilitated by powerful Jewish influences there." "The news of Pearl Harbor," Lukacs writes, "lifted the hearts of millions of Jews around the world. It was also the death-knell for millions of Jews in Europe, even though none of them knew this." The Final Solution, in other words, was Hitler's reaction to what he regarded as an intolerable provocation on the part of American Jews, a way of punishing them for their warmongering.

In fact, as has been abundantly documented, there is no causal connection whatsoever between Pearl Harbor and Auschwitz. Hitler's decision to destroy European Jewry was planned from the beginning in two stages. Stage I envisaged the consolidation of Europe's Jews in conquered Poland; Stage II, the actual systematic murder, was to be deferred until Hitler struck at Soviet Russia, the citadel of the Bolshevik-Jewish world conspiracy. Hitler probably started planning the actual mechanics of the Final Solution early in 1939, and he carried it out according to schedule. That Lukacs, a scholar of some repute, is unaware of all this, is impossible to believe. He himself mentions the Wannsee Conference of 1941 in which the administrative guidelines of the Holocaust were laid down; that conference was initially planned for November 1941—a month before Pearl Harbor.

ALTOGETHER, the attitudes toward Jews expressed throughout this book are disturbing, to say the least. In his section on "The Problem of the Jews," for example, having just assured the reader that "unscrupulous scum, of the type of a Stavisky or an Ilya Ehrenburg, merely floated on the surface" of Jewish society, Lukacs next offers a long quotation from the "intelli-

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gent, sensitive, and honest Jewish French philosopher," Henri Bergson, on the subject of Bergson's yearnings toward Catholicism. In the same vein, he quotes extensively from the really appalling theories of a Jewish convert to Christianity, "the extraordinary young Jewish genius," Otto Weininger, whose views on Jewish spiritual degeneracy, among other things, were often cited by the Nazis as justification for their own anti-Semitism. Lukacs seems to feel that while not all European Jews resembled the crooked financier and the Bolshevik intellectual, these notorious Jewish "types" were prevalent enough in Jewish society to induce the best Jews to convert to Christianity. That he does not say so explicitly, but merely implies it by quoting "honest" Jewish sources, is not the sort of rhetorical trick one expects to find in a work of serious historical scholarship by a writer of his evident talents.

Growing Up Abused

THE CHILDREN OF THE COUNTERCULTURE. By JOHN ROTHCHILD and SUSAN WOLF. *Doubleday. 207 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by JANE LARKIN CRAIN

THE ADOLESCENTS who made up the "youth revolution" of the 1960's—the flower children, hippies, communards, self-styled radicals, and other assorted counterculture types—are now in their late 20's and early 30's. Though the members of this once clamorous band have dispersed throughout society, a fair portion of them, it seems, have neither sought nor found places in the mainstream. John Rothchild and Susan Wolf, he a former Fulbright scholar and now a professional journalist based in Florida, she a young widow with two small children, set off on a cross-country tour to find out what had become of these aging rebels, what sorts of lives they were making, and especially how they were raising their own children.

The authors' travels, which began in Miami, took them to numerous enclaves throughout the country where young men and women were pursuing "alternative life-styles." They visited some rural and urban communes, Synanon (a drug rehabilitation community in California to which many non-addicts are now also repairing), and several "religious" communities based for the most part on bastardized forms of Eastern faiths.

The authors' own "progressive" credentials were well in order for this journey. Living together but unmarried, they allowed Mrs. Wolf's two-year-old daughter to puff on marijuana, planned to send both her children to "free schools" (without courses, schedules, grades, permanent records, or required curriculum), and, most important, were raising them "in a much more open and aware manner than their parents had raised them." Moreover, before the authors began their odyssey—in a Volkswagen which they self-deprecatingly refer to as a "portable suburb" because it contained such encumbrances as books, toys, and snacks—they had already assured themselves on a number of points regarding American society. That society, in their view, had proved to be a breeding ground of corruption and distress—they cite such symptoms as the high divorce rate, corporate chicanery, the rape of the land, the sundry pathologies of the nuclear family. Since, however, it was the protesters of the 1960's who had been the first to divine how badly things were going, it seemed highly possible that they had gone on to find a way out of the trap. Specifically, those who had been "expected to become doctors or lawyers, people who grew up in middle-class America and then rejected it," might have succeeded in raising children who were not only free and "aware" but well-behaved (because happy) and unobtrusive.

JANE LARKIN CRAIN *has contributed reviews and essays to* COMMENTARY, Saturday Review, *and the New York* Times Book Review.

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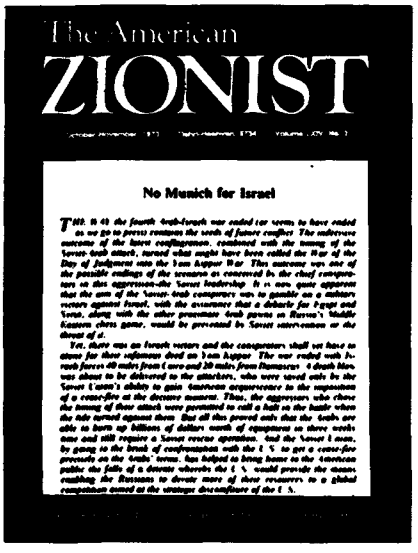

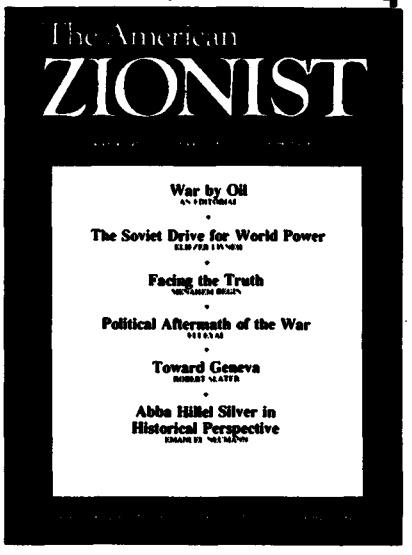

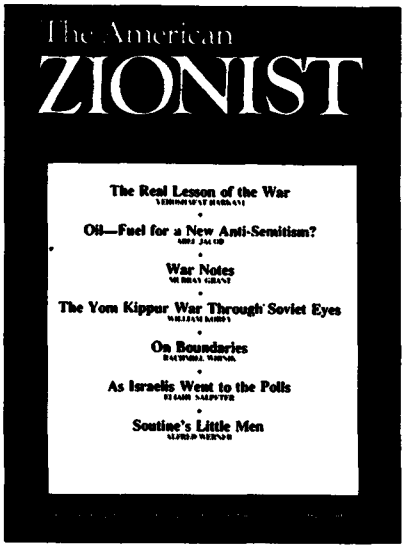

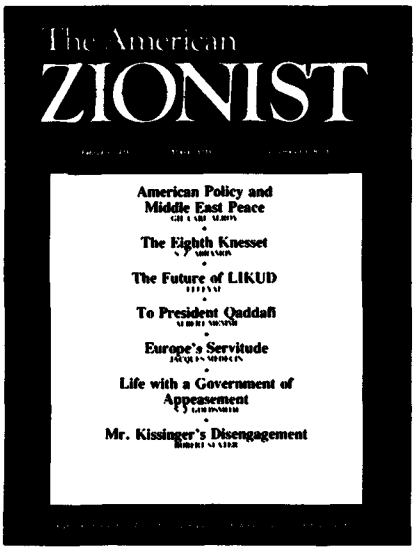

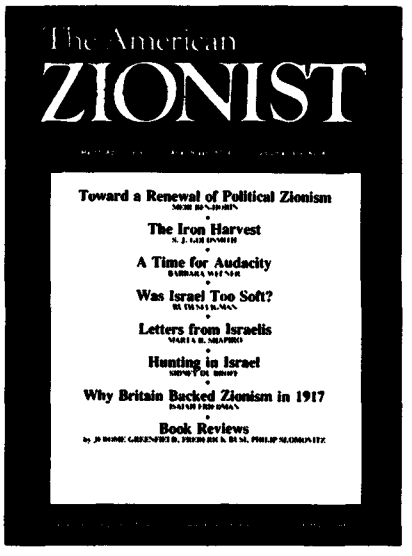

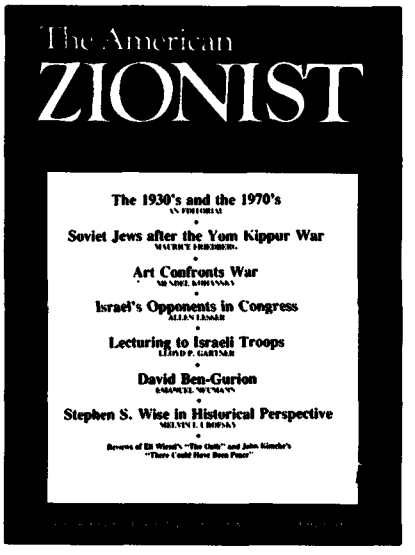

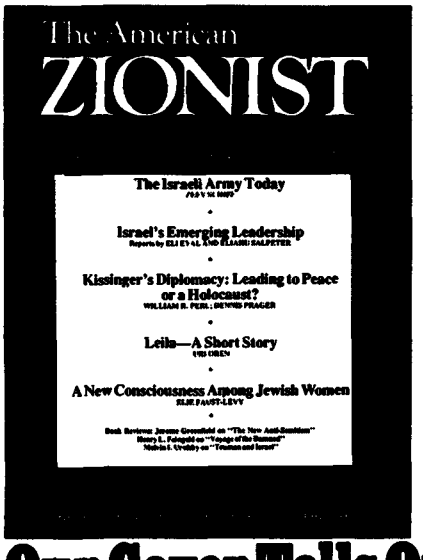

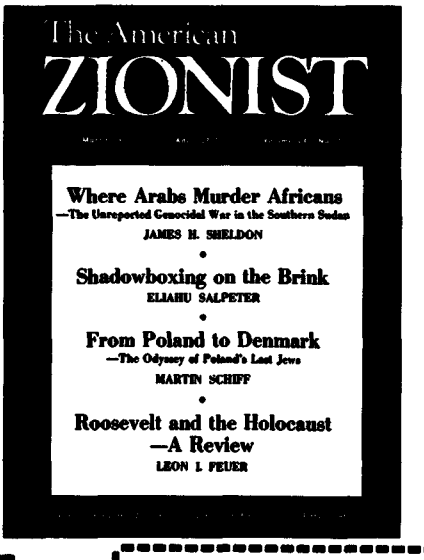

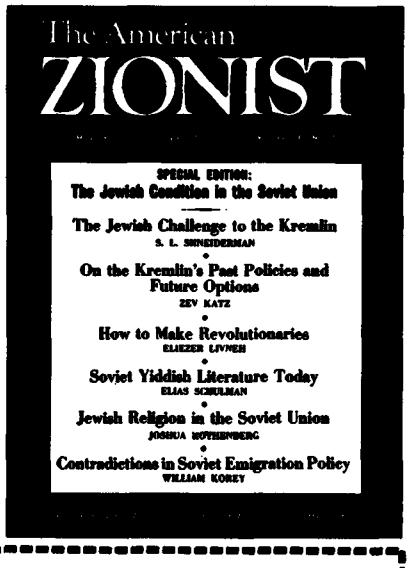

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Although nothing in their research was to shake the special disapprobation Rothchild and Wolf reserve for the nuclear family, neither did the "alternatives" they investigated please them entirely. Especially in urban areas where parents tended to hold down regular jobs, the authors found that many individuals of supposedly radical persuasion were only masquerading as "free people"; though they did not force their children to bathe, go to school, keep regular hours, or observe any of the other bourgeois conventions, their children still did not seem to be prospering. The children, in fact, seemed rather troubled, and many were, worst of all, quite badly behaved, a constant burden to the adults around them, "the general nuisance and bother they had become in many American homes."

Thus, investigating one "free school" in Miami, they encountered Ben, a ten-year-old known as "the hippest kid in Miami." Son of a sometime pimp-and-prostitute team who lived rent-free in a friend's $75,000 house, Ben had been carrying on sexual activities with his mother since he was six; she boasted that this would redeem him from the Oedipal tortures by which most men are beset. Surly and withdrawn, he was not, the authors concluded after several weeks of observation, really "liberated" at all but merely the victim of a familiar American syndrome—parental efforts to aggrandize themselves through the "successes" of their children!

Similarly disappointing to the authors were the several religious communes they visited. They were especially dismayed by Guracula, a boarding school in Dallas run by the Hare Krishna, where five-year-olds cry for mothers who have abandoned them, and the captive "students," wakened at three in the morning for prayer meetings, learn nothing but the teachings of their parents' "religion," have no play time, and are discouraged from speaking of anything that does not heighten "Krishna consciousness." Yet this is not the worst feature of the place. According to Rothchild and Wolf, despite "rigid discipline, prodigious use of the apple switch, long hours of praying and chanting, isolation from the rest of the world," there is still "noncompliance on the part of the children." For all the beatings, the children do not toe the line.

Finally, however, in various isolated, rural communes, Rothchild and Wolf did find forms of child-rearing that were paying off; these turn out to be explicitly authoritarian in nature. They enthuse especially over The Farm, a conglomeration of tents and old buses set on some acreage in Tennessee, bought by reformed professionals who threw off their old ways, as the authors put it, "not for some abstract notion of utopia, but for that very specific euphoria that comes when you are stoned and in love with the world." The adults, who live according to "a rigid code of behavior" developed by their leader, have found a way not only of purifying their own lives, but of raising decent children as well. During the day, the children are organized into work crews, in a manner reminiscent to the authors of "the little children in Mao's China." Surveying the beehive activity of The Farm, the authors note: "Children were walking up hills, pulling wagons, even as young as eighteen months old, but they were not crying." This miracle, they are told, is made possible because even babies are "put outside the energy center when they cry"; the great genius of The Farm management, it turns out, is to render its population of two hundred children "invisible." Here, no one frets over pediatrics or education. The children of The Farm interfere in their parents' lives at peril of being banished from them:

> Nobody asked the question, "What will you be when you grow up?" and the absence of that concept simplified discipline to a remarkable extent. . . . The only important question is whether the little girl is being a bitch right now, or the little boy is being a brat right now.

BEYOND THE routine biases that inform this book—unequivocal opprobrium for the middle class, unqualified sympathy for every impulse, however harebrained or squalid or corrupt, that sets itself against that institution—lies something relatively new and pernicious, which amounts to a hatred of children. Almost from the outset of *Children of the Counterculture*, Rothchild and Wolf reveal a hostility toward children (most blatantly, Mrs. Wolf's own) that they hardly bother to dissemble. The two-year-old is described as a "complete bitch" (when she seeks her mother's attention it is called "obnoxiously tugging" at her skirt); both boy and girl are constantly derided as "whiners" and "show-offs"; and when either interrupts some scholarly rumination or a bit of dope-smoking, perhaps to ask for a glass of water, it is taken as a symptom of the way Western civilization has turned parents into the slaves of their offspring.

The underlying assumption in all this is that children as a rule are so insufferable that "radical solutions" must be found to make them bearable. Any particular solution that may be hit upon is then judged by the authors according to one standard only—how far does it go in obviating the soul-sapping burden that children are to their parents? From the Hare Krishna school, which imposes slave-labor camp conditions on youngsters in the name of religious education, through the state-of-nature anarchy of communes where children run in unsupervised packs like wild dogs while their parents hold consciousness-raising · sessions, take drugs, and lock their offspring out of the kitchen so that an evening meal need not be shared with them, to the regressive, semi-fascistic conditions of places like The Farm, Rothchild and Wolf uncover one after another set of "alternative life-stylers" who in reality have discovered nothing more "radical" than various ways of escaping parenthood.

That those who are themselves flagging in the business of growing up should be found woefully at sea in the raising of their own children is perhaps not surprising. After all, they are merely continuing, into adulthood, and decked out in a rhetoric suited to their new situation, the patterns of

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egotism for which they became notorious in their own youth in the 60's. It is, however, indicative of the values the authors share with these parents that the abuse and neglect of children should come to be hailed by them as a pioneering act of heroism. For this we needed a counterculture?

LBJ

LYNDON JOHNSON AND THE AMERICAN DREAM. By DORIS KEARNS. *Harper & Row. 432 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by JEANE KIRKPATRICK

IT HAS been nearly a decade since the first public reports that then President Lyndon Johnson, one of the most influential political figures of the last fifty years, had chosen as a confidante and preferred biographer a comely White House fellow with Harvard connections and anti-war proclivities. In the ensuing period there have been so many intimations of revelations to come and so many rumors and announcements concerning Doris Kearns's relationship to Johnson, to Harvard, to publishers, to lawsuits, and to Richard Goodwin that the appearance of her long-promised psychobiography seems anti-climactic, especially since *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* turns out to be an entirely unsensational book. Miss Kearns's respect for her subject, and her restraint in handling the data at her disposal, identify this as a serious effort.

Like all biography, psychobiography attempts to describe adult behavior and to relate it to antecedent experiences which dispose the subject to deal with the world in characteristic ways. The distinctive characteristics of psychobiography (as practiced, for example, by Erik Erikson, Alexander and Juliette George, and Doris Kearns) derive from certain "Freudian" assumptions: that the self screens reality so that an individual's behavior is always a result of personal as well as "objective" events; that behavior is influenced by unconscious and partially conscious predispositions as well as by conscious purposes; that certain childhood experiences have critical importance for the adult psyche. These assumptions result in greater attention on the part of the biographer to unconscious and subconscious phenomena —dreams, ego-defensive behavior— and to such aspects of early-childhood experience as relations with parents and siblings.

While the conventional biographer is content to describe his subject's life and times, the psychoanalytically-oriented biographer attempts to identify patterns of behavior and to "explain" those regularities by reference to "underlying" predispositions rooted in the subject's early life. If, like Doris Kearns, the psychobiographer is also a student of personality and politics, she will seek to discover the *political* consequences of her subject's personal characteristics. Since personality and character are inferred phenomena not directly accessible to observation, since political situations are almost always complex, and since most human actions are (in Freud's term) "overdetermined," inquiry into the political consequences of personal characteristics is fraught with intellectual hazards among which reductionism and psychologism are notable. Doris Kearns is obviously sensitive to those pitfalls, and deserves credit for a sustained and largely successful effort to avoid them; she rarely oversimplifies or ignores the non-psychological determinants of Johnson's behavior. And through most of the book she resists the temptation—to which psychobiographers seem especially prone—to overemphasize pathological elements of her subject's behavior and underestimate his creativity and personal strengths. Only in her discussion of Johnson's persistence in Vietnam does Miss Kearns adopt the perspective of the psychoanalyst explaining the dynamics of stubbornly neurotic behavior.

Miss Kearns's Johnson is consistent with the portraits by most previous Johnson biographers: we see again an enormously intelligent, talented, hard-working, well-meaning man driven by restless ambition, endowed with a powerful constitution, possessed of an unusual talent for intimacy, for compromise, and for legislative leadership. Understanding that character derives from psychological predispositions and environmental influences, Miss Kearns gives us Johnson's own description of his early childhood, including the relations with his mother, father, grandfather, siblings, and with the society into which he was born and with which he so powerfully identified, and she traces the evolution of Johnson's extraordinary political skills —from the cradle through the family, school, and college, to Washington, first as assistant to Congressman Richard Kleberg, then as Congressman, Senator, and Vice President. She shows how Johnson hungrily sought and acquired the intellectual, economic, social, and political resources needed to move on to greater political successes in ever larger arenas until he arrived finally at the White House, not merely as John Kennedy's heir but as recipient of the largest landslide ever recorded.

Johnson's ambition was rooted, Miss Kearns believes, in an unappeasable hunger for approval. Though Johnson's relation to his mother was unusually close, his mother's affection was (or seemed to him to be) contingent on his performance, awarded or withdrawn according to his accomplishment. Forever hungry for expressions of approval, Johnson was convinced from an early age that approval depended on success. Though his needs were rooted in the intense relationship with his mother, the goals he set for himself received massive reinforcement from his culture. "All my life," he explained, "I built around a series of truisms from the Bible, folklore, honor your father and mother." A strong constitution and good mind helped, but, "the real payoff . . . which contributed more to the successes I had was the belief that where there was a will there was a way. If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. Pure will power and determination. Just like here at the ranch: be the first man all week on the pipe, carry the end pipe, the heavy one, in your slippers if neces-

JEANE KIRKPATRICK, *who teaches political science at Georgetown University, is the author of* Political Woman *and the forthcoming* The New Presidential Elite.

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sary, with sheer guts, sheer will power, and finally you'll get your own boots."

Calvinist ethic? Frontier spirit? Horatio Alger? This familiar creed, taught in the Baptist Sunday Schools, the textbooks, the schoolrooms, the dime novels, the folklore of Lyndon Johnson's boyhood reinforced the lessons learned at his mother's knee: approval depended on success, both could be won with hard work, determination, and perseverance. For such a person activity and achievement became not only a means to wealth and applause, but *the* way to stave off ultimate self-doubt. For such a person there is never a question of resting or of being satisfied with past achievements: ". . . each successful performance led only to the need for more."

A SECOND basic predisposition rooted in Johnson's early life was, Miss Kearns tells us, an acute dislike, even a fear, of conflict. This aversion developed out of Johnson's need to mediate—at least within himself—the conflict between his "refined" mother who valued education, good manners, and sobriety, and his robust father, a sometime state legislator and uncertain provider whose "idea of pleasure was to sit up half the night with his friends, drinking beer, telling stories, and playing dominoes." Again, personal conflict was reinforced by culture: a culture that associated femininity with intellectuality and "manners," and masculinity with strength, activity, and a certain crudity. Johnson's reaction to this earliest conflict set the pattern for life: avoid confrontation, compromise, refuse to choose—if necessary, withdraw. Anxiety in the face of direct, open conflict not only stimulated Johnson's brilliant efforts to achieve consensus, it was present in the nearly unbearable anxiety occasioned by electoral contests. Miss Kearns tells us that fear of confrontation and of defeat led Johnson to prepare statements of withdrawal in three major elections: 1948, when he was first elected to the Senate; 1964, when he was for the first time his party's nominee for President; and 1968, when he startled the nation by announcing his intention to withdraw from the presidential contest. It was present as well in the illnesses which landed him in the hospital prior to three other elections, "his body asserting the desires that the mind was restraining."

The unceasing search for approval in a conflicted environment left Johnson especially sensitive to interpersonal cues, and the resultant sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of others became the basis of the famous Johnson "treatment" by which he disarmed opponents and won allies. It was also present in the "father/son" relations which Johnson cultivated with Carl Vinson, Franklin Roosevelt, Richard Russell, and other powerful seniors and from which he invariably profited. Johnson's "apprenticeships" expressed an understanding of power as the ability to bind others to him by serving their interests. "I knew from the start," Miss Kearns quotes him as saying, "all relations of power rest on one thing, a contract between a leader and the followers such that the followers believe it is in their interest to follow the leader."

JOHNSON'S understanding of power as a dimension of interpersonal relations, which rests on persuasion and mutual benefit, was ideally suited to the U.S. Congress, a self-governing institution of equals in which the influence of the leadership rests ultimately on the acquiescence of members. The diversity and low cohesion of legislative parties necessitated the building of coalitions on specific issues. And since opponents on one issue might become necessary allies on the next, it was important to limit conflict, minimize divisiveness, and eschew symbolic satisfactions. Lyndon Johnson's proclivity for mediating conflict, avoiding confrontation, building consensus, and his distaste for the "politics of principle" were ideally suited to this style of politics and to this arena.

Yet precisely those qualities which made Johnson the outstanding modern Senate leader created dreadful problems for him as a President confronted with political polarization, confrontation politics, and personal attack. In her analytic appendix Miss Kearns suggests not only that the qualities needed for the legislature and the Presidency differ, but that a career in the legislative process may inculcate modes of behavior or strengthen qualities inconsistent with the nature of the presidential institution. Perhaps so—still, Johnson's record of effectiveness during his first three or four years as President was an impressive one, which may only indicate that his particular executive leadership was better suited to periods of relative calm.

Miss Kearns's picture of Johnson bears a striking (if unmentioned) resemblance to Harold Lasswell's description of the political man: predisposed to value and to seek power, sensitized to the dimensions and outcomes of the use of power, possessing the skills needed to win power. In *Psychopathology and Politics,* Lasswell sketched a prototype of the political man, one who seeks power as compensation for a somewhat (but not too severely) damaged self-esteem, in the name of some conception of the public good. Like Lasswell's political man, Johnson (as described by Miss Kearns and others) was "addicted" to politics—forever preoccupied with political questions, tactics, outcomes. But he was never power mad, and he was not guilty of seeking power for himself alone. Johnson's frequent references to "his" boys, "his" planes, "his" people were expressions of the broad identifications desirable in democratic leaders. It was just these identifications that underlay Johnson's comprehensive program of domestic reform.

Miss Kearns argues persuasively that the Great Society was a highly personal expression of Lyndon Johnson's character and vision: expansive, inclusive, optimistic, a Johnson blend of populism, patriotism, and pragmatism. Business *and* labor, ghetto black *and* white worker, old *and* young, fine arts *and* Main Street—the Great Society would accommodate everyone, deprive no one, and move the country further toward the fulfillment of the American dream:

> Medicare for the old, educational assistance for the young, tax rebates for business, a higher minimum wage for labor, subsidies

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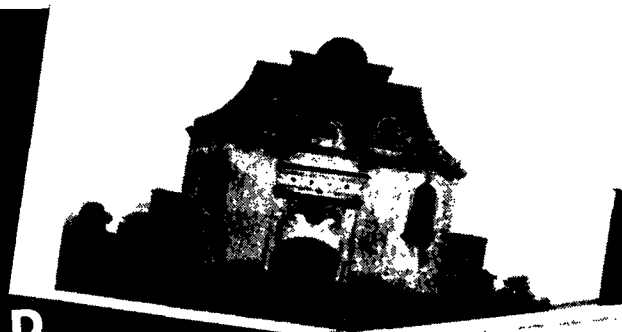

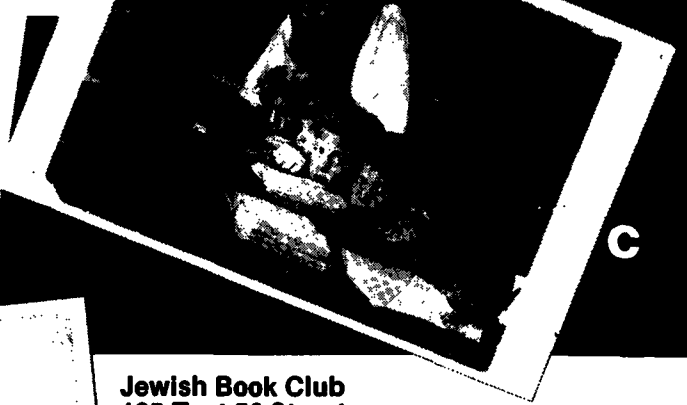

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Yet despite Johnson's efforts to de-emphasize the war and keep the focus of attention on domestic reform, the growing burdens of escalation in Vietnam diverted resources from the Great Society. "I knew from the start," Johnson told Miss Kearns, "that I was bound to be crucified either way I moved":

> If I left the woman I really loved —the Great Society—in order to get involved with that bitch of a war on the other side of the world then I would lose everything at home. All my programs, all my hopes to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. All my dreams to provide education and medical care to the browns and the blacks and the lame and the poor. But if I left that war and let the Communists take over South Vietnam, then I would be seen as a coward and my nation would be seen as an appeaser and we would both find it impossible to accomplish anything for anybody anywhere on the entire globe.

Did Johnson "cause" the Vietnam war? Did his personal characteristics shape his Vietnam policies? To this question, which has already provoked passionate answers from Johnson's detractors and defenders, Miss Kearns brings a certain amount of new information about how Johnson himself perceived his situation and policies, a generally sympathetic assessment of the man, and a conviction that the Vietnam war was a disastrous mistake. First, she reminds us of what we already knew: that on assuming the Presidency Lyndon Johnson moved into a highly structured situation which offered few alternatives. Not only were there twenty thousand American military "advisers" already in Vietnam, but there was near unanimity concerning the appropriate definition of the problem—how could the United States deter Communist aggression against South Vietnam?—and its correct solution—by the measured application of force the U.S. would demonstate that aggression does not pay. Miss Kearns reminds us, too, that the consensus on Vietnam policy extended beyond Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Dean Rusk, and the other Kennedy holdovers to the leaders of both parties in both the legislative and executive branches.

The "lessons" of Munich convinced Johnson and his advisers that aggression must be met with force. And the "lessons" of the McCarthy period left Johnson permanently fearful of a jingoistic attack from the Right. Miss Kearns provides fascinating new documentation of Johnson's persistent anxiety that a new McCarthy—perhaps in the form of his arch-enemy Robert Kennedy, who, after all, had a historical connection with the original McCarthy committee—would arise and challenge Johnson for lack of zeal in opposing Communism. The vision of a potentially potent challenge from the Right and the fact of an increasingly powerful challenge on the Left made it possible for Johnson to conceive his policy of measured escalation as a "middle course." Determination to hew to this course of moderation and controlled escalation in turn led Johnson to soft-pedal the patriotic appeals and anti-Communist rhetoric needed to mobilize continuing popular support for the war. This strategy, however, which had psychological as well as strategic appeal for Johnson, neglected a crucial fact: that young men (and their families) cannot reasonably be expected to undertake ultimate risks for contingent goals. His restraint in conducting the war left Johnson without protection against the unrestrained attacks of the burgeoning peace movement.

Was it, then, Johnson's war? Miss Kearns understands that character, belief, and environment each played a role in the decision to escalate. And Johnson, whose long political career gave little evidence of interest in foreign policy, little concern with ideology or with the Communist threat either internally or externally, came to identify himself and his Presidency with this war which proved both a personal and a political tragedy. Involved with an adversary who would not bargain, confronted by angry, often violent opponents at home, Johnson, the man who needed approval and who detested conflict, withdrew. It is a tribute to the coherence and persuasiveness of Miss Kearns's account that Johnson's withdrawal, which seemed so shocking in 1968, appears as a nearly inevitable response of the man to his circumstances.

She is less successful, though, in dealing with Johnson's own explanation of his political difficulties. Johnson's conviction that he was "sabotaged" by the media, the Eastern intellectual establishment, the Kennedyites, is dismissed by Miss Kearns as delusion, as part of a desperate effort to find a scapegoat, to feel exculpated and martyred: ". . . to believe oneself the target of a giant conspiracy was such a leap into unreason that it could only mean disintegration of Johnson's thought, that the barriers separating irrational thought and delusion were crumbling."

But were they? The notion that the networks, the New York *Times*, the Washington *Post*, the political jet-set have the power and the inclination to bring down Presidents, and the belief that these groups share some distinctive perspectives on Communism and anti-Communism, patriotism and national security—these ideas are too widely shared to be dismissed simply as delusional thinking. Johnson's successor held precisely the same view concerning those who were after *him*. And this was no *folie à deux*, affecting only incumbents of the White House. The same groups figure prominently among the "bad guys" in the political cosmos of George Wallace, Spiro Agnew, William Rusher, Kevin Phillips, and Patrick Buchanan.

Johnson was convinced that "they'll get me anyhow, no matter how hard I try." To Miss Kearns all this is absurd. She believes that Johnson, usually so astute in his judgments concerning people and

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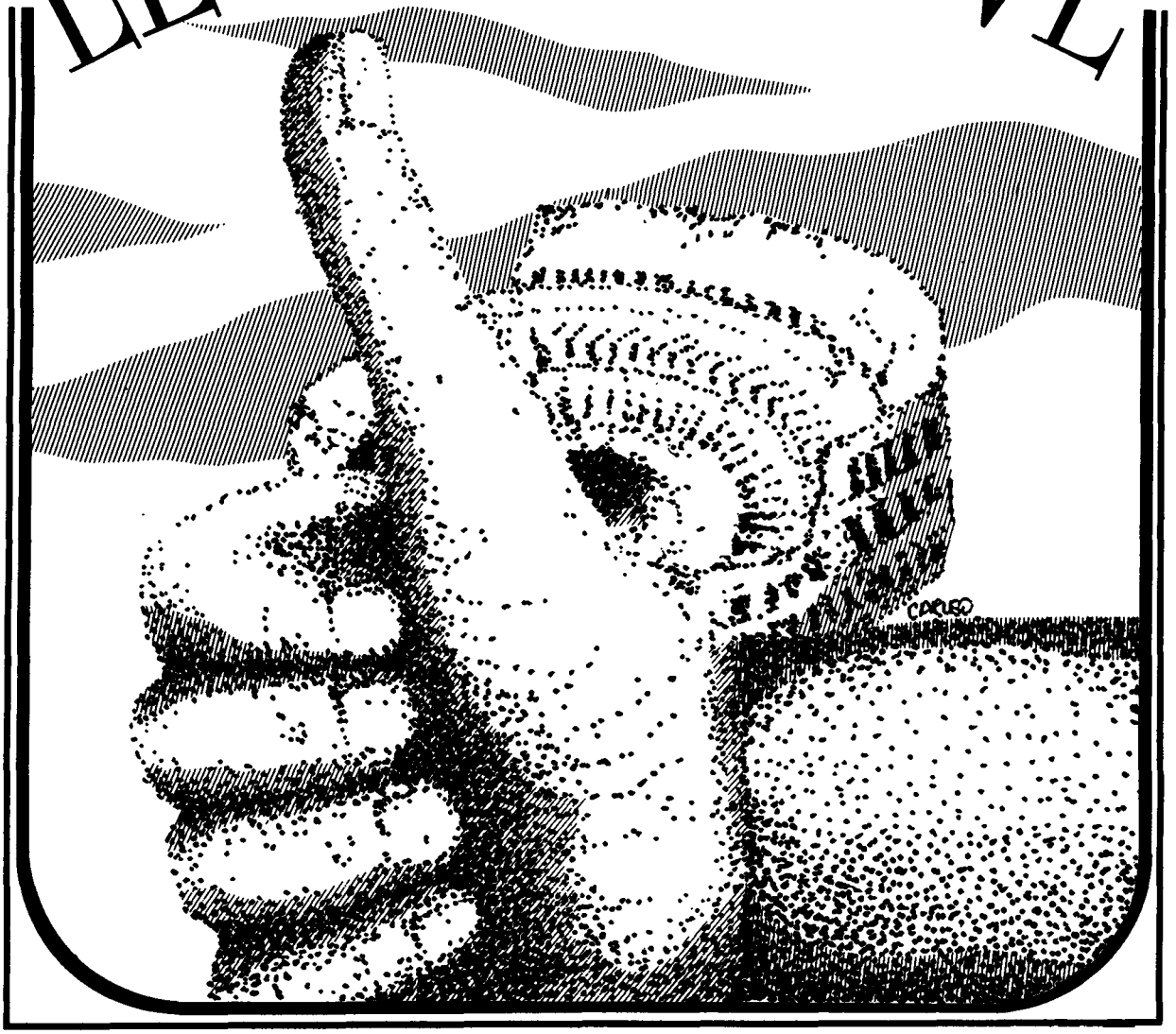

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power, was led into error by ego-defensive needs. She therefore takes little note that the opponents of whom Johnson spoke did, in fact, play a major role in his political destruction.

Miss Kearns also shows a certain weakness for clichés unsupported by evidence ("the American people were anxious for a renewal of belief"), and an occasional failure of imagination ("It is difficult to understand how anyone could have rationally believed that [Robert] Kennedy might be a crusading hawk") or information (French failures in Indochina did *not* nearly bring down the Fourth Republic). In her strictures on Johnson's parochialism, furthermore, Miss Kearns herself succumbs to a fashionable brand of "cosmopolitan parochialism" (the phrase is Irving Kristol's). Was it really so naive of Johnson to believe that "there were no foreign cultures, only different ways of pursuing universal desires?" Many students of culture believe that a limited number of basic human desires and needs recur among the most diverse peoples, and the notion of universality in art and religion is based on just such an assumption.

Finally, it was not then and is not now nearly so clear as Miss Kearns believes that "the Vietnamese people were interested in unanimity, not pluralism," that they placed no value on the freedom of individuals or families, that they had no desire for private property. Like the two million refugees who streamed into South Vietnam after Ho's seizure of power, the hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese who fought to the end and the tens of thousands currently undergoing "reeducation" in forced-labor camps provide good grounds for doubting that Vietnamese Communism is simply a modern expression of traditional communal habits and longings. There are obvious pitfalls in projecting American or Western values and goals onto other peoples, and it may be, as Miss Kearns argues, that Johnson and his advisers were guilty of an arrogant and uninformed parochialism. But there are also dangers—to which many are currently less sensitive—in supposing that the citizens of dictatorship *prefer* to live without individual freedoms and personal security. Miss Kearns walks boldly into the erroneous assumption that the Communist success in the South indicates the compatibility of Communism with traditional Vietnamese culture. This position bears a dismaying resemblance to some odious philosophies from our own traditional culture: that whatever is should be; that might makes right; that "lesser breeds without the law" do not desire the legal protections we routinely claim for ourselves.

These criticisms aside, however, Miss Kearns has written an interesting and useful book, one which contains fascinating information on how Lyndon Johnson saw himself. Is the portrait accurate? Some Johnson associates say no, and assert that Doris Kearns was merely the last person to receive the famous Johnson "treatment." They suggest that the dreams reported in the book were never dreamed but are stories composed by Johnson to interest a psychoanalytically-oriented Harvard intellectual. Miss Kearns, these critics argue, has swallowed and regurgitated Lyndon Johnson's preferred self-image. It is, of course, impossible to determine what Johnson did or did not dream, but the fascinating dreams which express a lifelong fear of paralysis (powerlessness) are not only consistent with what is known of Johnson's character, they are products of *his* mind—awake or asleep—and so are relevant to understanding him.

Miss Kearns's book is not the definitive biography of Johnson—she made little use of the accounts of others concerning their association with Johnson, or of available contextual materials—but she has illuminated the "fit" among Johnson, the institutions in which he served, and the policies he authored. Her book should be appreciated by all but the most determined opponents of psychobiography.

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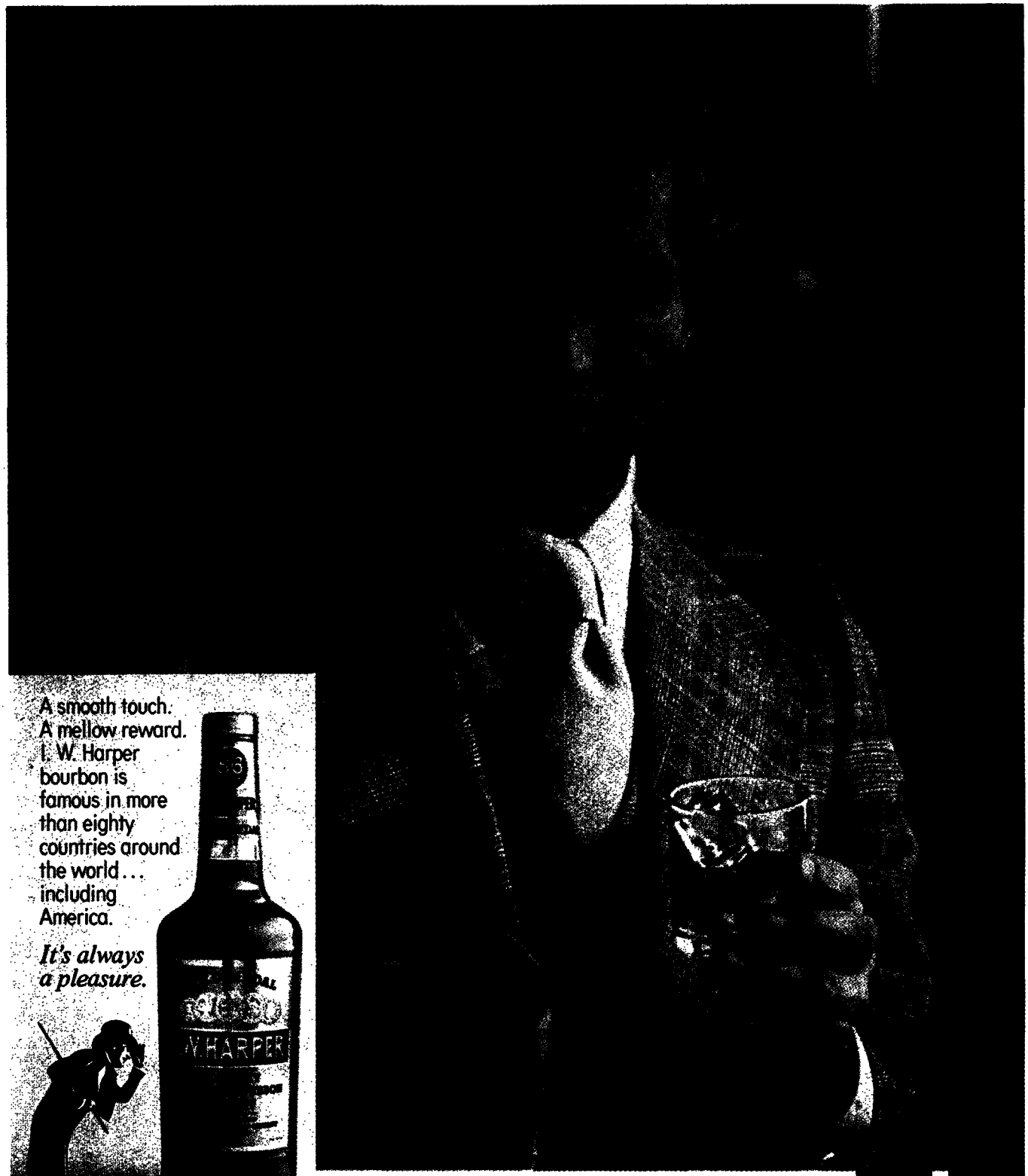

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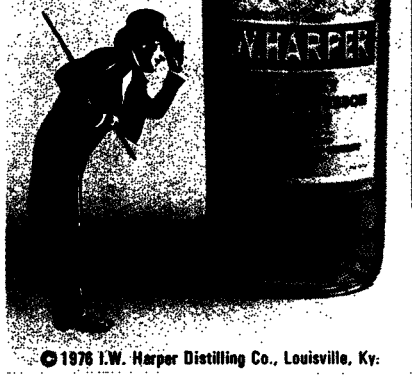

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by Allen Mac Kenzie

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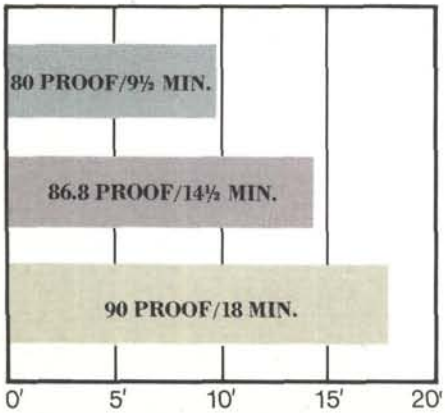
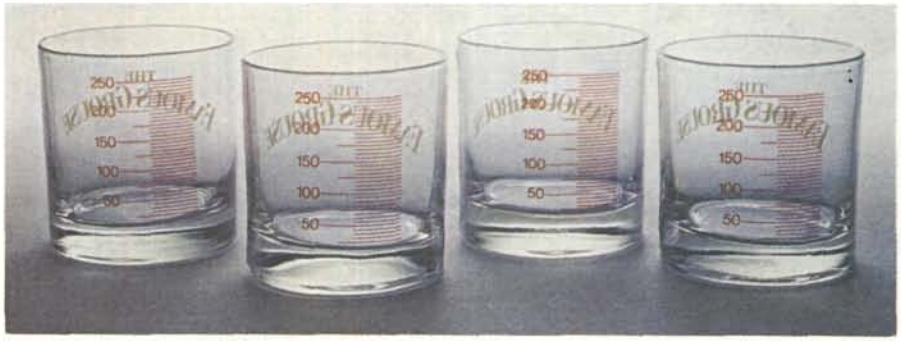


TIME IT TAKES THREE DIFFERENT SCOTCHES TO DILUTE TO 45 PROOF WHEN POURED OVER ICE (IN MINUTES.)



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